

**Sexuality,
Violence,
Slavery,
Apostasy
and
Women's Right
in
Islam & Sharia Law**

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A CONCISE GUIDE TO ISLAM

EXPLAINING THE MAIN QUESTIONS AND LAWS ABOUT ISLAM

Rokeya B. Mir

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Our Humanity:

Humanity lives today in a “global village,” where no people or nation can live in isolation from and indifferent to what goes on elsewhere. Our world is so interdependent and so interrelated that peaceful dialogue has become an imperative. In spite of the general erosion of commitment to “religion,” however interpreted or misinterpreted, religion still plays a pivotal role in shaping people’s attitudes and influencing their behaviour. In spite of serious instances of abuse of various religions by some of their claimed followers so as to justify or instigate acts of brutality and bloodshed, there are positive and helpful common themes in these religions. Therefore, peaceful and candid intra-faith and inter-faith dialogues are important tools in working for such goals. This paper is a humble contribution to that dialogue from one perspective within a major world religion that is the professed faith of nearly one fifth of the human race; one that is more misunderstood than any other faith, sometimes, even, by some of its followers.

This book examines the nature and parameters of the normative relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims. It is based mainly on an attempt to understand the Qur'an in *its own* textual and historical context. To do this, it is necessary to begin with the methodology and assumptions that underpin the paper.

Methodology: The basic methodology and assumptions of this book are summed up as follows:

As a religious faith, normative Islam is not identical with the actions of its “followers.” Like other religions, followers or claimed followers are imperfect, fallible human beings. There are times when their actions conform, in various degrees, to the normative teachings of their faith. But there are also times when their actions are either independent of or even in violation of such normative teachings.

Outsiders may see these offending acts as part of the practice of faith. Sometimes, these acts are committed, falsely, in the name of faith. These claims are made as a result of ignorance, “sincere” misinterpretations, or even deliberate misrepresentations that are intended to provide sanction and authority for such acts. Examples of that include attempting to justify or explain the killing of innocent non-combatants by making out-of-context references to the Qur'an. Similarly, there are those who justify bombing abortion clinics or killing and dispossessing the Palestinian people by making selective or out-of-context references to the Bible. The history of various religious communities is replete with such aberrations, even as it is replete also with successful implementation of the norms of their faiths. Human successes or failures are not always identical with ideal norms.

To evaluate whether a given act or argument conforms to the normative teachings or not, there must be some criteria of such evaluations; how are these norms to be identified? In the case of Islam, there is no dispute about its primary sources: the Qur'an and authentic (or sound) Hadith (or Sunnah). The Qur'an, for Muslims, is God's revelation to His Final Messenger to humankind, Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). It is an imperative pillar of faith in Islam to accept the Qur'an as the verbatim word of God dictated to the Prophet by Gabriel (Jibreel), the Angel of Revelation.

Being revelation in meaning as well as exact wording, the Qur'an is regarded by Muslims as the highest and final authority in learning about Islam and its stances on various issues and queries. Hadith refer to the words, actions, and approvals of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) in matters relating to the teaching of the faith and its implementation. Hadith is similar to the Qur'an, being a form of revelation and, hence, a primary source of Islam. It is different, however, in the fact that it is a revelation in meaning only. The words of the spoken part of Hadith are the Prophet's, not God's.

Furthermore, the Qur'an is fully authentic as it has been meticulously preserved by being committed to memory by masses of people in addition to its preservation in writing from the very beginning. Hadith, on the other hand, may vary with respect to the degree of authenticity (soundness). As such, Hadith must be understood in the light of the Qur'an and interpreted in a way that does not contradict any established Qur'anic principle. On the other hand,

Hadith also serve as elaborators, clarifiers, and explainers of the Qur'an. This means that the text of the Qur'an and relevant authentic Hadith on a given topic must be studied in an integrative manner.

Secondary sources of Islam include two generally agreed upon sources as well as debatable sources. The generally agreed upon sources are a consensus of the scholars on a given issue (*ijma'*), and analogical deduction (*qiyas*).

Secondary sources are not revelatory, even though they are based on interpretations of revelatory sources.

While *ijma'* and *qiyas* are more generally accepted, they are themselves dependent upon the primary sources for their authority and reasoning. Interpretations involve human judgment; they may vary and are fallible as well. This implies that a sound argument based on the Qur'an and Hadith cannot be rejected on the grounds that the opinion of a scholar is different from it or inconsistent with it. Errors of understanding and interpretations are possible and do occur. Yet errors cannot be attributed to Allah and His Revelation.

It should be noted, however, that some traditional scholarly opinions (*ijithad*) may be rejected, not because of a methodological error, but because of the fact that such opinions were partly shaped by the special circumstances and historical setting of their times. Such circumstances may differ significantly from those in today's world. In all cases, opinions are to be judged by the primary sources, not the reverse. It may be helpful to note that there is no single person or authority in Islam whose interpretation of any debatable issue is seen or accepted as the only valid one, let alone being viewed on a par with the texts of the Qur'an and Hadith.

Human rights in Islam

The awareness about human rights during the last few hundred years has brought about major changes in the world. However, the Quran, many centuries earlier, laid down the basis of these rights.

A Western thinker, Robert Briffault, asserts that humanity is indebted to the Quran for its progresses. He says, "The ideas that inspired the French Revolution and the Declaration of Rights that guided the framing of the American Constitution and inflamed the struggle for independence in the Latin American countries [and elsewhere] were not inventions of the West. They find their ultimate inspiration and source in the Holy Koran."

Thomas Jefferson, who wrote the American 'Declaration of Independence', kept the Quran in his library. When the library was burned down once, he ordered another copy of the Book. More than two hundred years later the first Muslim congressman, Keith Ellison, took the oath of the office on Jefferson's Quran

Briffault concurs with scholars such as Thomas Carlyle, Goethe, Margoliouth and many others in their assertions that the Scripture contains seminal ideas about human life and society that are comprehensive and very progressive.

George Bernard Shaw says: "The future religion of the educated, cultured and enlightened people will be Islam. "

The right of a person is generally denoted as 'haqq' in the Quran. The concept of 'haqq' is pervasive. Whatever is rightfully due to a person is 'haqq'. These rights are scattered all over the Quran; some are laid down in straight forward ways but others – more fundamental or inherent rights that a person can claim just by being a human being – are implied but with paramount importance.

The main thrust of Islam is to establish justice and a just society on earth. The goal is peace [one of the meaning of Islam is peace]. The Scripture implies that peace cannot be attained without justice; and justice prevails only when rights are upheld. The Quran expounds that any violation or undermining of a right constitutes an injustice.

The Book says God has made all human beings His representatives or vicegerents ['khalifa'] on earth [2:30, 6:165, 27:62]. Therefore, all God's 'khalifa' are equal on earth. Each person can claim the honor and dignity the position 'khalifa of God' commands. God is one and all human beings are His creation and servants. In these respects in Islam all human beings are equal before God, therefore, they should be equal before law, society and humanity. The right to equality is fundamental in Islam

It is implied in the Quran that this status of 'khalifa' is awarded to humans not arbitrarily but because God has enormously empowered them and made them capable of sensing truth and discerning right from wrong.

Different verses shed light on different aspects of the enormity of this endowment to humans. Prostration is exclusively reserved for God. However, after creating Adam, the prototype of humans, God commanded all the angels to prostrate before Adam and thus gave a God-like status to humans. The Quran proclaims, “Indeed, We have conferred dignity on all children of Adam (as their birth-right).” (17:70).

What is the nature of endowment that make a human God-like? The Quran alludes that God has given humans “fitratulla” [fitra means nature] or a God given ‘nature’ or God’s nature or true nature. Then the Book proclaims that the one ever-true religion [al-Din al-Hanif] for mankind is to comply with this ‘nature’ [Quran 30:30]. Any deviation from this nature amounts to injustice, the bigger the deviation the higher the derailment.

Different verses in different places of the Scripture provides glimpses of this endowment “Fitratullah”: it consists of the faculty of reason and conscience, the intuitive and spiritual capacities, the inherent knowledge or wisdom God granted humans, and may be much more. Most of all this enormous capacity enables one to sense truth. By virtue of this empowerment God has granted humans the right to free will. The idea of the ‘Day of Judgment’ and man’s accountability to God rests on the legitimacy that God has granted humans the right to liberty. Therefore the right to equality and liberty are the fundamental rights of a human being.

Next, the right to life comes from the idea that God blows His own Spirit into a human being at the time of creation [15:29] thereby making a life sacrosanct. Killing a human being is prohibited except in the way of justice and/or fighting war against the spread of massive injustices and oppression. The Book expounds that tumult and oppressions are worse than killing as these lead to extreme injustices, inhuman sufferings and a degrading state. The Quran defines ‘crime against humanity’ in terms of killing one innocent human being [5:32]. The Scripture proclaims that if one innocent human being is killed, it is as if entire humanity is killed, and if one life is saved as if entire humanity is saved. This indeed is a higher standard than the one the International Criminal Court [ICC] could come up with fourteen centuries later.

The right to life, liberty, equality, dignity, own and dispose properties, privacy, etc are people’s inherent rights as per the Quran, rights any human being can claim irrespective of his/her religion, race, etc. Protecting and preserving these rights are also the foundation of a modern democratic system.

The thinkers of the European Enlightenment period and later the Founders of the American Revolution who laid down the framework of modern democracy realized that in order to establish a stable progressive society the government must preserve, protect and defend these rights for all citizens. A good governance then is one in which the people holds the ultimate power and the government obtains its legitimacy to rule from the very people it rules and that the government so formed remains limited in its power. A constitution that lays down the framework of a republic with separation of power, proper checks and balances and a system of periodic elections to elect people’ representatives to govern can help attain these objectives.

Fourteen centuries ago, the Charter of Medina [Sahifat al-Medina], the very first constitution written in history, ensured these rights of people in the very first community Prophet Muhammad [pbuh] established in Medina. The system was a federal democratic system in which people of different creed – Muslims, Jews and Pagans – formed a single community ensuring safety and security of life, equal rights, freedom of religion, lifestyle and expression, etc. of all people of the community irrespective of their differences. The Modern-day scholars wonder at the similarities between the Charter of Median and the American Constitution that was drafted eleven centuries later. They increasingly discover historical connections for these amazing similarities between the two important historic documents, however that is beyond the scope of this writing.

There are different categories of rights in Islam. Besides the inherent rights, there are specific rights in Islam as to a person’s birth into a family such as inheritance rights and a person’s position in the family such as spousal rights, the position with respect to other people in a group with common cause such as fraternal rights, the rights of neighbours, rights of a member of a community or citizen’s rights, etc. Still there are rights that arise due to efforts and activities such as workers’ rights, trade-partner’s rights, other rights such as the right to presumption of innocence until proven guilty, etc.

A right comes with the responsibility in Islam. The responsibility necessitates exercising discretion and maintaining moderation and balance to avoid conflict and social instability. Freedom of expression is a fundamental right in Islam however the faith does not condone the misuse of this right to arouse hatred, prejudices, and phobias and the abuse of this right to humiliate and disgrace others [49:11,12]. These kinds of misuses and abuses are tolerated in the West in the name of freedom of expression.

Some times some individual rights need to have some limitations for the sake of establishing a healthy society. In the West, however, individual rights are given paramount importance and the collective rights of a society often are ignored or marginalized. As a result, in the name of individual rights excessive greed, materialism, promiscuity, etc. are pursued to the degrees at which the societies tend to become unfair and dysfunctional.

Islam advocates social justice, sharing wealth with the needy and poor, shun excessive materialism, extravagances and live relatively simple. People can become better off or wealthy through rightful means but they should share their wealth with the poor and pay Zakat or the 'purifying dues'. The poor have a right [haqq] on the wealth of the better off or rich people. All these reasonable restraints are meant to promote and sustain healthy set of values for a society to become stable, peaceful and progressive.

Therefore whenever there is a conflict between an individual right and the collective right of a society Islam advocates striking a balance. As individual rights cannot disregard the collective rights of a society, the collective rights cannot trample individual rights.

Islam grants complete freedom in matters of faith [Quran 2:256]. More than hundred prominent scholars and Imams of our time and some organizations have vehemently disagreed with the assessment that apostasy is punishable by death in Islam. To the contrary They believe there is no worldly punishment for apostasy in Islam. [please see their comments in <http://apostasyandislam.blogspot.com/>.]

Women are given equal status with respect to all inherent rights and most other rights except inheritance. In cases of inheritance there are some differences. However, taking all the financial matters into consideration woman and man are at par with each other. Women have the right to own and dispose properties as they wish. They have complete freedom in exercising their rights.

Facing injustices and oppression the people or a group has the collective right to be united and fight to stop rampant violations of rights and justices. Believers are commanded to establish justice. Therefore they have the right and responsibility to struggle to establish justice, peacefully and/or with arms. This is called Jihad in Islam. There are a lot of misconceptions about Jihad both among non-Muslims as well as among Muslims in the world today.

Islam has given paramount importance on peaceful Jihad against wrong and injustices. Believers must exhaust all peaceful and diplomatic means before using their right to take up arms. Patience, perseverance and consistency are advocated in peaceful Jihad. However, if all peaceful efforts – such as dialogue, diplomacy, negotiation, warning even threats -- fail to bring about the change, it is believers' rights to fight against tumult and oppression.

Facing injustices and oppressions Islam does not allow indifference or looking the other way. Everyone has the right to defend his/her rights or fight for it. The struggle must be relentless and forceful until justice and fairness prevails.

Many major movements of our time that led the world a bit closer to justice and fairness were founded on the values and principles of human rights such as the civil rights, workers rights, immigrants' rights, women's liberation, collective bargaining, and most importantly liberation movements in many countries. In essence they address a person's right to liberty, equality, and dignity.

Our world as we see today largely has been shaped by these fundamental concepts of human rights that the Quran laid down a long time ago. The whole world, in spite of being imperfect and troublesome, has been slowly gravitating towards human rights, fairness and justice, the acceptance of diversity and tolerance [2:148, 5:48], and universalism that the Quran propounded more than fourteen centuries ago.

The most unfortunate thing is that the Muslim world is not at the forefront of this Jihad to establish human rights as there are rampant violations of these rights in many Muslim majority societies. Hundreds of years of false

indoctrinations and misplaced priorities have robbed the lights from the ideas expounded by “fitratullah” and “khalifa” in the Quran.

They fail to recognize, among many other issues, that since all human beings -- irrespective of race, religion, gender, etc.-- are representatives [khalifa] of God, the sovereignty of a people collectively then represents the Sovereignty of God. There is no clash between these two ideas of sovereignty: one is temporal and limited and the other is eternal and unlimited.

This can change and it must change. This necessitates a real enlightened process of education, dialogue, patience and perseverance. In essence it needs the peaceful Jihad of the enlightened people in a society. It requires the vigilance and efforts of the thinking people of a society to help arouse the awareness and the commitment of a people that will become the vanguard of a system to help protect their rights and their values

Prejudices, ignorance, fanaticism, extremism, hatred, power-hunger, greed, etc. that violate or compromise rights of people also obstruct justice and hinder peace in the world.

PROPHET MUHAMMAD 'S PROMISE TO CHRISTIANS:

Muslims and Christians together constitute over fifty percent of the world and if they lived in peace, we will be half way to world peace. One small step that we can take towards fostering Muslim-Christian harmony is to tell and retell positive stories and abstain from mutual demonization.

We propose to remind both Muslims and Christians about a promise that Muhammed made to Christians. The knowledge of this promise can have enormous impact on Muslim conduct towards Christians. Muslims generally respect the precedent of their Prophet and try to practice it in their lives.

In 628 AD, a delegation from St. Catherine's Monastery came to Prophet Muhammed and requested his protection. He responded by granting them a charter of rights, which I reproduce below in its entirety. St. Catherine's Monastery is located at the foot of Mt. Sinai and is the world's oldest monastery. It possesses a huge collection of Christian manuscripts, second only to the Vatican, and is a world heritage site. It also boasts the oldest collection of Christian icons. It is a treasure house of Christian history that has remained safe for 1400 years under Muslim protection.

One of the most recognisable symbols in the modern media is the glaring ISIS banner of fanaticism, which ironically displays the hand print of the ring the Muslim prophet Muhammad, a man who was known for his extraordinary compassion towards Christians and Jews.

Bilal was an Ethiopian man who believed in the religion of Muhammad and accepted the One God as his deity. He was seized by the pagans and mercilessly tortured and Arab historians reported that Muhammad burst into tears when he heard of the agonising brutality his dear friend Bilal was facing. Records show that Muhammad was besotted with grief and despair and hurried to his friends, trying to secure release for the helpless Bilal, and after

much negotiation, he was able to purchase Bilal from his pagan owners and released him at once. Bilal was free, and from that day, he became one of the closest friends to Muhammad. He also became one of the most respected men in the Peninsula and later in life, when Muhammad had established a democratic government, Bilal was his minister of finance and confidante.

Muhammad had taught his countrymen the importance of loving neighbours and caring for the weak and the elderly. He exhorted the pagans to worship only One God, the Lord and Creator of the heavens and the earth, and told them to treat all of mankind equally, but the polytheists were furious over the revolutionary ideas Muhammad introduced to them, and they rejected his message that all humans were equal under the eyes of God. The pagans doubled down on their hatred and began to belittle Ameen and increased the persecution of innocents. Often, they hurled animal excrement at him, and stomped on his face when he knelt to pray. For many years, this man was unable to ride his horse or camel, because the pagans of Mecca would kick him off his camel and injure him until he could not walk.

The family of Muhammad's friend, Ammar, was also suffering at the hands of the idolaters during this time, and pagan torturers flew into fits of rage and flung spear into Ammar's mother, wounding her gravely.

The Muslim prophet was a sensitive and quiet man but he could not tolerate seeing any of his friend get hurt, and when Muhammad saw the terrible plight of Ammar and his parents, who were being tortured by the pagans, tearfully he cried out to them. "O family of Ammar! Rejoice, as you have most certainly been promised paradise." When he heard that Ammar's mother was murdered by her jealous employer, tears poured down from his eyes as he broke the tragic news to Ammar, vowing to love him as his own kin.

Muhammad knew about the generosity of a Christian king who ruled Ethiopia and he told his followers to go to the king and stay under his protection so that the polytheists cannot harm them anymore.

Muhammad loved and respected Christians greatly and he trusted the followers of Jesus Christ with all his heart. Therefore, he instructed his friends who believed in one God to flee from the Peninsula and seek refuge under the protection of a Christian king.

In order to frame the Muslim religion for various crimes and turn Muslims against their own monotheistic faith, the mercenaries who organised ISIS decided to carry out a genocide against Christians by framing Muslims, and create a localised conflict. On 2015, the ISIS mercenaries kidnapped and slaughtered 21 men and priests on a Mediterranean beach and released the video in Egypt's Minya province. Those victims lived in the south of Cairo, near a farm community of some 6,000 Muslims and Christians living in brick, mud and stone houses. After the brutal murders of its residents, the town was thrust to the centre of the crisis emanating from Libya, where ISIS established a foothold in the chaos of a civil war and killed hundreds more.

These terrorist factions wanted to start a civil war between Egypt's Coptic Christians, who make up between nearly twenty percent of Egypt's population of 80 million. In all their beheading videos, the ISIS mercenaries brandished the banner which displayed the symbol of the Arab illiterate prophet's ring, because they hoped that everyone who saw this would think that Muhammad or his religion somehow approved of the murder of Christian priests, but the reality is the opposite, because according to the British historian John Davenport, the Muslim prophet was related to Christians via his wife Khadeejah, whose cousin was a devout monk, and he was fond of all Christians. Muhammad personally invited Christians to his home and asked them to pray inside Muslim mosques.

In proof of the correctness of the view thus taken by the historians of the tolerant character of Muhammad, the following public document gives a glimpse of the covenant of Muhammad with the Christian monks.

The Patent of Muhammad, which he granted to the Monks of Mount Sinai, and to Christians in general.

"As God is great and governeth, from whom all the prophets are come, for there remaineth no record of injustice against God; through the gifts that are given unto men, Mohammed, the son of Abdallah, the Apostle of God, and careful guardian of the whole world, has written the present instrument, to all those that are his national people, and of his religion, as a secure and positive promise to be accomplished to the Christian nation and relations of the Nazareen, whosoever they may be, whether they be the noble or the vulgar, the honourable or otherwise, saying thus:

I. Whoever of my nation shall presume to break my promise and oath which is contained in this present agreement, destroys the promise of God, acts contrary to the oath and will be a resister of the faith (which God forbid!), for he becometh worthy of the curse, whether he be the king himself or a poor man, or what person soever he may be.

II. That whenever any of the monks in his travels shall happen to settle on any mountain, hill, village, or in any other habitable place, on the sea or in deserts, or in any convent, church, or house of prayer, I shall be in the midst of them, as the preserver and protector of them, their goods and effects, with my soul, aid and protection, jointly with my national people, because they are a part of my own people, and an honour to me.

III. Moreover, I command all officers not to require any poll tax of them or any other tribute, because they shall not be forced or compelled to anything of this kind.

IV. None shall presume to change their judges or governors, but they shall remain in their office without being deposed.

V. No one shall molest them when they are travelling on the road.

VI. Whatever churches they are possessed of, no one is to deprive them of them.

VII. Whosoever shall annul any of these my decrees, let him know positively that he annuls the ordinance of God.

VIII. Moreover, neither their judges, governors, monks, servants, disciples, or any others depending on them, shall pay any poll tax, or be molested on that account, because I am their protector, wheresoever they shall be, either by land or sea, east or west, north or south because both they and all that belong to them are included in this my promissory oath and patent.

IX. And if those that live quietly and solitary upon the mountains, they shall exact neither poll tax nor tithes from their incomes, neither shall any Muslim partake of what they have, for they labour only to maintain themselves.

X. Whenever the crop of the earth shall be plentiful in its due time, the inhabitants shall be obliged, out of every bushel, to give them a certain measure.

XI. Neither in time of war shall they take them out of their habitation, nor compel them to go to the wars, nor even then shall they require of them any poll tax.

(In these eleven chapters is to be found whatever relates to the monks; as to the remaining seven chapters they direct what relates to every Christian.)

XII. Those Christians who are inhabitants, and with their riches and traffic are able to pay the poll tax, shall pay no more than 12 drachmas

XIII. Excepting this, nothing more shall be required of them, according to the express word of Goil, that says: Do not molest those that have a veneration for the Books that are sent from God, but rather, in a kind manner, give of your good things to them, and converse with them, and hinder everyone from molesting them.

XIV. If a Christian woman shall happen to marry a Muslim, the Muslim shall not cross the inclination of his wife to keep her from her chapel and prayers and the practice of her religion.

XV. That no person hinders them from repairing their churches.

XVI. Whosoever acts contrary to this my grant, or gives credit to anything contrary to it, becomes truly an apostate from God and his divine Apostle, because this protection I have granted to them according to this promise.

XVII. No one shall bear arms against them, but, on the contrary, the Muslims shall wage war for them.

XVIII. And by this I ordain that none of my nation shall presume to do or act contrary to this promise until the end of the world.

The Patent of Mohammed, which he granted to the Monks of Mount Sinai, and to Christians in general.

“As God is great and governeth, from whom all the prophets are come, for there remaineth no record of injustice against God; through the gifts that are given unto men, Mohammed, the son of Abdallah, the Apostle of God, and careful guardian of the whole world, has written the present instrument, to all those that are his national people, and of his religion, as a secure and positive promise to be accomplished to the Christian nation and relations of the Nazareen, whosoever they may be, whether they be the noble or the vulgar, the honourable or otherwise, saying thus:

I. Whosoever of my nation shall presume to break my promise and oath which is contained in this present agreement, destroys the promise of God, acts contrary to the oath and will be a resister of the faith (which God forbid!) for he becometh worthy of the curse, whether he be the king himself or a poor man, or what person soever he may be.

“Do not molest those that have a veneration for the Books that are sent from God, but rather, in a kind manner, give of your good things to them, and converse with them, and hinder every one from molesting them.”

XIV. If a Christian woman shall happen to marry a Mussulman, the Mussulman shall not cross the inclination of his wife to keep her from her chapel and prayers and the practice of her religion.*

XV. That no person hinder them from repairing their churches.

XVI. Whosoever acts contrary to this my grant, or gives credit to anything contrary to it, becomes truly an apostate from God and his divine Apostle, because this protection I have granted to them according to this promise.

XVII. No one shall bear arms against them, but, on the contrary, the Mussulmans shall wage war for them.

XVIII. And by this I ordain that none of my nation shall presume to do or act contrary to this promise until the end of the world.

Witnesses:

Ali, the Son of Abu Thaleb.
Homar, the son of Hattavi.
Ziphir, the son of Abuan.
Saith, the son of Maat.
Thavitt, the son of Nesis.
Amphachin, the son of Hassan.
Muathem, the son of Kasvi.
Azur, the son of Jassin.
Abombaker, the son of Ambi Kaphe.
Ottman, the son of Gafas.
Ambtelack, the son of Messutt.

This present patent was written by the leader, the successor of Ali, the son of Abu Thaleb; the prophet marking it with his own hand at the Mosque of the Prophet in the second year of the Hegira, the third day of the month, of Machorem.

The above facts suffice to convince every candid and unprejudiced mind that the charges of intolerance against the Muslim prophet Muhammad are utterly devoid of foundation, is, therefore, both false and scandalous.

The above chart has been taken from the English orientalist, John Davenport's book, An Apology for Mohammed and The Koran.

When he could no longer bear the torment of the people of Mecca, Muhammad decided to seek shelter in the house of his uncle Abbas, who owned a residence in the neighbouring city of Taif. He hoped his Christian relatives and cousins would be able to protect him from bodily harm and insults.

However, when Muhammad arrived at the strange town of Taif, he was brutally kicked and whipped for daring to enter their territory, and as he tried in vain to make his countrymen understand that he had come for no other purpose save to seek shelter in the house of his beloved uncle Abbas, every pedestrian began to pelt him with stones, and urchins were tossing filth on his face, and in that terrible time, he had found brief shelter in the periphery of an orchard, and seating his grievously wounded body on a rock, he raised his hands to plead his insignificance to his Creator, the God of Abraham, Moses and Jesus, and in that time of tribulation, a devout Christian farmer had come to his aid, offering some food and refreshment. The owners of the orchard, who were pagans at the time, saw Muhammad's sorrowful condition and had pity on him and allowed him to rest briefly, unmolested by the crowd. The wealthy polytheist landowner wondered how a rich and handsome man like Muhammad could tolerate such vile behaviour and endure such derogatory insults from the people. He was once the most sought-after bachelor in Arabia, but had lost all his wealth, all business ventures and every single loved one after proclaiming to his people about the oneness of God. His wealth and status were seized from him for merely announcing that all of mankind should be equal, regardless of genealogical subdivision. Muhammad told his countrymen that women and children, orphans and slaves, prisoners and captors were all alike, but the polytheists rejected his message and tormented him in every way they could think of, and finally in this foreign town, knowing he was a long way from home and away from friends and family, they unleashed ultimate terror upon Muhammad, coaxing wild animals to chase and bite him, letting loose mad dogs to maul him, setting upon him urchins whose task was to throw bricks and hot stones upon him, until he collapsed to the floor, bleeding and aching in every limb of his noble body.

The same intelligence structure that created groups such as Al-botiniya and the Assassins, also helped create ISIS, and in the end, both served to destroy religion and cause chaos in the world. In 1065, a mysterious group emerged from the Iran-Iraq border, and although they called themselves Muslims, they embarked on an assassination spree and tried to kill all the Muslim leaders in the Arab world. Those men, calling themselves Al-botiniya, was akin to the ISIS fighters of today, and they also burned and tried to destroy every last copy of the Muslim holy book, and claimed that they were the followers of a new version of Islam. Those men tried to remove all Islamic laws and create their own distorted version, where rape and murder was permissible. Their fighters were bloodthirsty and pillaged Muslim cities, and enslaved women and children into sex camps, and they viciously executed any Muslim cleric who dared to speak against them. The Muslim world was in chaos, and the Arab leaders were at a loss what to do, because the men who participated in the pillaging and ravaging claimed to be Muslims. However, it was during this time that the Muslim philosopher Al-Ghazali was born, and he grew up to be a fine scholar and was successful in exposing the group as a heretic terror network. This finally put an end to their terror.

The Promise to St. Catherine:

"This is a message from Muhammad ibn Abdullah, as a covenant to those who adopt Christianity, near and far, we are with them.

Verily I, the servants, the helpers, and my followers defend them, because Christians are my citizens; and by God! I hold out against anything that displeases them.

No compulsion is to be on them. Neither are their judges to be removed from their jobs nor their monks from their

monasteries. No one is to destroy a house of their religion, to damage it, or to carry anything from it to the Muslims' houses.

Should anyone take any of these, he would spoil God's covenant and disobey His Prophet. Verily, they are my allies and have my secure charter against all that they hate.

No one is to force them to travel or to oblige them to fight. The Muslims are to fight for them. If a female Christian is married to a Muslim, it is not to take place without her approval. She is not to be prevented from visiting her church to pray. Their churches are to be respected. They are neither to be prevented from repairing them nor the sacredness of their covenants.

No one of the nation (Muslims) is to disobey the covenant till the Last Day (end of the world)."

The first and the final sentence of the charter are critical. They make the promise eternal and universal. Muhammed asserts that Muslims are with Christians near and far straight away rejecting any future attempts to limit the promise to St. Catherine alone. By ordering Muslims to obey it until the Day of Judgment the charter again undermines any future attempts to revoke the privileges. These rights are inalienable. Muhammed declared Christians, all of them, as his allies and he equated ill treatment of Christians with violating God's covenant.

A remarkable aspect of the charter is that it imposes no conditions on Christians for enjoying its privileges. It is enough that they are Christians. They are not required to alter their beliefs, they do not have to make any payments and they do not have any obligations. This is a charter of rights without any duties!

The document is not a modern human rights treaty but even though it was penned in 628 A.D., it clearly protects the right to property, freedom of religion, freedom of work, and security of the person.

I know most readers, must be thinking so what? Well, the answer is simple. Those who seek to foster discord among Muslims and Christians focus on issues that divide and emphasize areas of conflict. But when resources such as Muhammed's promise to Christians are invoked and highlighted it builds bridges. It inspires Muslims to rise above communal intolerance and engenders good will in Christians who might be nursing fear of Islam or Muslims.

When I look at Islamic sources, I find in them unprecedented examples of religious tolerance and inclusiveness. They make me want to become a better person. I think the capacity to seek good and do good inheres in all of us. When we subdue this predisposition towards the good, we deny our fundamental humanity. In this holiday season, I hope all of us can find time to look for something positive and worthy of appreciation in the values, cultures and histories of other peoples.

The famous American author, Alexander Russell Webb wrote a book on how to observe prayer in Islam, and it is from his texts that we share a few passages to enlighten readers about the simplicity of the religion billions of Muslims adhere to:

The word "Islam" means resignation to the will of God, or aspiration to the higher divine principle that exists within every man. We may carry this expression of the Islamic idea further and say that a Mussulman, Moslem, Mohammedan or Follower of Islam is one who not only believes in the Unity of God and the inspiration of Mohammed, but who endeavours earnestly and honestly, from day-light to the hour when he closes his eyes in sleep, in every thought and act of his life, to cultivate his higher spiritual nature and bring his soul nearer to that divine spirit which is a part or accompaniment of his spiritual nature. Perfect purity of thought, word and deed, the deepest fraternal love, and the exercise of all the virtues must be the active elements of every true Mussulman's daily life. The teachings of the Holy Koran and the system of social and religious practices established by our Holy Prophet were intended to assist mankind in their soul-development, and are the most perfect and effective ever given to humanity. But to be efficacious they must be followed intelligently and honestly and with the right motives; otherwise, they cannot be expected to benefit those who pretend to follow them. Man is a free agent and his salvation lies with him; if he desires and tries to be saved he will be, but no vicarious atonement nor any human

intermediary can be of any possible benefit to him. Our Prophet never claimed to be a redeemer; he insisted that he was only a preacher or teacher, and that he could only point out the true way for men to save themselves. If we are ill, the medicine prescribed for us will not cure us unless we take it as the physician directs; how, then, can we expect to gain eternal happiness if we do not follow faithfully that system which seems the best to secure that end?

It would not be just nor wise for us to admit that anyone can so cultivate his higher spiritual faculties as to attain to the perfection of Paradise, without following strictly the system taught by the Holy Koran and our Prophet, no matter how intelligent, conscientious, earnest, and well-educated he may be. It is plainly apparent that we must teach and urge the necessity of complete and faithful adherence to the Islamic laws and practices. This is obvious to everyone who understands what salvation is and has arrived at a comprehension of the spiritual nature of man as a whole. Every single article of practice in the Islamic system ; every motion, act, posture and expression has a deep meaning and is intended to assist, directly and positively, in the attainment of certain good results. It is only the highly developed Mussulman who understands the meaning and intent of all the devotional acts, but all may acquire this knowledge if they truly desire to do so. The most important factor in securing the realization of this desire is the careful and willing observance of the simple forms of ablution and prayer.

THE FIVE PILLARS OF PRACTICE: Ablution, Prayer, Alms-giving, Fasting and Pilgrimage are called the five pillars of practice, and all there is in the way of forms and ceremony is in these.

Orthodox Mohammedanism may be divided into six heads, as follows:

1st Faith in God.

2nd Belief in Angels.

3rd Belief in the Holy Koran.

4th Belief in all of God's Prophets.

5th Belief in the resurrection and judgment.

6th Belief in the omniscience of God.

As before said, these are the points of belief upon which the orthodox Mussulmans are united, but no one is expected to believe these things until he has examined them and has become convinced through his reason that they are true. If he believes in the 1st, 3d and 4th, and observes the Five Pillars of Practice, he will be considered a very good Mussulman, although he may not be prepared to declare himself as to the 2d, 5th and 6th. A very rigidly orthodox Muslim would not consider his neighbour a really true follower of Islam unless the latter declared his full belief in the six points and observed the Five Pillars of Practice as well as the Islamic laws and social customs.

In the consideration of this subject, however, we should bear in mind that nothing is binding upon any rational, intelligent man that is not strictly in harmony with his reason. The spirit of our Prophet's teachings tends to the broadest liberality of thought and judgment, and confirms us in the conviction that belief and practice should be adapted to the mental development of the human race.

The educated, thoughtful man in this 19th century, in the Western Hemisphere, at least, would be expected to endorse, or declare his belief in anything he did not understand, or that appeared irrational to him.

Therefore, when one has studied and thought upon the subject, and has arrived at a belief in the Unity of God and the inspiration of Mohammed, he can readily make the declaration: "La, illaha illala, Mohammedur resoul Allah" (There is no God but one God; Mohammed is the Prophet of God). He then becomes a Muslim. If he really believes

in the truth of this declaration, he will honestly endeavour to learn all about the religion of Islam, will take the teachings of the Holy Koran and the Prophet as his guide in life, and will follow the Five Pillars of Practice.

And now let us consider them briefly before we take up their practice in full detail.

Ablution as it is called, before prayer, has two purposes: one is to secure perfect physical cleanliness, and the other is to symbolize the washing away of all sinful impurities from the soul before presenting it in prayer to God. But physical cleanliness is carried even further than the ablution. Frequent full baths are taken so that all parts of the body may be clean. A full bath is always taken after sexual intercourse, water being poured over the body from head to foot. When calls of nature are answered the parts are always washed carefully with running water. As before said, perfect physical cleanliness is the end desired.

Prayer was said by our Prophet to be the corner-stone of Islam.

But the Islamic idea of prayer is quite different from that of some other systems ; it is not the cringing begging for worldly, material benefits or advantages ; it is not a petition to a god who is expected to change his mind if he is coaxed and flattered; it is not the abject craving of doubtful rights and privileges ; but it is a soulful aspiration to a higher spiritual condition and an earnest, manly hymn of praise and benediction, as will be seen from the prayers given later on. The Mussulman believes that God is All-wise, All-powerful, Ever-Present, and All-merciful ; that He knows what we need and what is good for us ; that He will give us what we are justly entitled to and will withhold from us what we are not entitled to, no matter how much we beg and plead for it; that he is not to be swerved from His purposes by bribes and flattery, but that He is always the God of love, mercy, benevolence, goodness, justice and charity.

Alms-giving is required for various reasons; one is that it strengthens the bond of fraternity between the giver and receiver; that it increases the love of the giver for all mankind and that it affords him an opportunity to improve his spirituality.

Fasting, like alms-giving, cannot be discussed fully in a volume of this general character. There are occult reasons why they should be practiced, and are of direct benefit to him who practices them in a devout and sincere spirit.

Fasting, as it is now practiced among the Mussulmans of the East, consists in abstaining, during the holy month of Ramzan, from eating, drinking and sexual oncourse from the approach of dawn until sunset. There are two obligatory features of the first:

- (1) The Niyah, or intention for a obligatory fast of Ramadhan which must be made before noon.
- (2) Abstinence from eating, drinking and sexual intercourse between the period just before dawn until after sunset.

The Holy Koran says: "O true believers, a fast is ordained unto you, that ye may fear God. A certain number of days shall ye fast; but he among you who shall be sick, or on a journey, shall fast an equal number of other days. The month of Ramzan shall ye fast."

The Imam Ghazzali designated three degrees of fasting:

- (1) Restraining the stomach and other parts of the body from satisfying their lusts and appetites.

(2) Restraining the ears, eyes, tongue, hands, feet, and other members from sin.

(3) The fasting of the heart from worldly cares, and restraining the thoughts from everything beside God.

Pilgrimage was originally instituted as a means of strengthening the Moslem fraternity. The early Moslems were directed to meet once a year at Mecca, during the holy month of Ramzan, to pray together as brothers and clasp hands in fraternal fellowship. The fraternal idea was strongly emphasized by our Prophet who realized that an annual meeting of his followers would be a most effective means of keeping them united as brothers. From this sprang the practice of pilgrimage from foreign countries to Mecca. Every Mussulman feels in duty bound to make the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in his lifetime, unless he is too poor to do so, in which event he is not blameable if he does not make it.

Let us now consider, in fuller detail, the first and second pillars of practice, viz. , ablution and prayer, which are so closely connected that they may be considered as one.

HOURS FOR PRAYER.

Prayers are said five times a day. In giving these hours we will use the Arabic nomenclature with Roman letters, as these names are known and used by all Mussulmans. "Namaz" means prayer.

The first Namaz, or Fajr prayer, is said before sunrise. Some Mussulmans hold that it should not be said until the first streaks of grey dawn appear in the east. Others consider it proper to say it at any time after midnight. But it must be said before the sun appears.

The second Namaz, or ZuTiar prayer, is said after the sun has passed the meridian and before 3 p. m., or between 12.30 and 3 p. m.

The third Namaz, or Asr prayer, is said between 4 p. m. and sunset; usually about 4.30 or 5.

The fourth Namaz, or Magrib prayer, is said immediately after sunset, just as the last rays of the setting sun fade away in tire west.

The fifth Namaz, or Isha prayer, is said just before retiring. Some Mussulmans hold that this prayer can be said within an hour or two after Magrib, while others insist that it should only be said immediately before retiring as the last act of the waking hours to confide body and soul, clean, to the care of God. The Holy Koran clearly supports the latter view.

These prayers are known as obligatory; there are three others known as Sunnat or voluntary, which are said by many of the more devout Mussulmans. The hours for these are : when the sun has well risen, about 11 a. m., and just after midnight.

Each prayer is divided into Rakaats of Furz, Sunnat, Nuffle or Vitar.

The full meaning of Rakaat will be explained when the prayers are given.

Furz means that which is fixed by the Koranic law and is obligatory. A Furz prayer must be said at each of the five stated periods.

Sunnat means a prayer which it was the habit of the Prophet to say, and which every good Mussulman should say, although it is not obligatory for him to do so. The Sunnat prayer is usually said at each of the five periods.

Nuffle is the voluntary performance of two Rakaats which may be omitted without sin.

Vitar is an odd number of Rakaats, either one, three, five or seven. Three are usually said after the Isha prayer, before retiring.

ARRANGEMENT OF PRAYER:

Fajr — 2 Rakaats Sunnat and 2 Furz.

Zuhar — 4 Rakaats Sunnat; 4 Furz ; 2 Sunnat.

Asr — 4 Rakaats Furz.

Magrib— 3 Rakaats Furz; 2 Sunnat.

Isha — 4 Rakaats Furz; 2 Sunnat; 3 Vitar.

Although this may seem a very complicated system, it is really very simple when one understands what a Rakaat is. This cannot be explained clearly until a full prayer is given in its regular order. It should be remembered that there is no fixed or specially ordered prayer, but that any sura, or chapter of the Koran may be used.

ABLUTION.

The ablution, or Woozoo, should be made before each prayer, but it may be carried from one prayer to another if, in the meantime, it has not been broken, by obedience to a call of nature, or there are no bloody or running sores upon the body. In such a case the Woozoo must be made completely the five times. It is made as follows:

The sleeves are tucked up a little higher than the elbows. Before commencing and while tucking up the sleeves, many Muslims repeat a short declaration something like the following: "I intend to purify myself from all physical uncleanness before I begin my prayer; that holy duty which shall draw my soul' near to the Most High. In the name of God, the Great and Mighty. Praise be to God who has given us grace to be Muslims. Islam is truth and infidelity falsehood."

The hands are then washed three times, and the mouth is rinsed three times, the water being thrown into it with the right hand. Water is then taken in the right hand and snuffed up the nostrils three times, the little finger of the right hand being thrust into each nostril each time to free it from all uncleanness. Before washing the nostrils some Muslims say: "O my God, if I am pleasing in Thy sight, perfume me with the odours of Paradise."

The face is then washed three times, the water being thrown up with both hands, care being taken to wash from the roots of the hair to the point of the beard.

The right hand and arm are washed to the elbow, the worshipper letting the water run from the hand down to the elbow. Sometimes, the following is repeated: "O my God, on the day of judgment, place the book of my actions in my right hand and examine my record with favour."

Then the left hand is washed in the same manner, the following being sometimes repeated: "O my God! Place not, at the resurrection, the book of my actions in my left hand."

Comparatively few Muslims repeat any of these invocations during the ablutions now-a-days, as they are not considered absolutely necessary. It is only the very devout and faithful who repeat them.

The turban or cap is then removed and both hands, very wet, are passed over the head from the forehead to the nape of the neck and then, with the palms turned outward, drawn forward under the chin, the beard being combed with the wet fingers from the throat upward. The tips of the forefingers are then placed in the ears, with the thumbs at the back of the ear-lobes, and the fingers are twisted to loosen and remove any foreign substance.

The neck and throat are then wiped with the backs of the hands, and the water is brushed, with the hands, from the arms and hands, passing the latter from the elbows down to the fingers. Clean towels may be used to dry the parts.

The feet are then washed from the ankles down, the fingers being passed repeatedly between the toes.

The water used should be clean and should be taken from a running stream, hydrant or vessel, from which it is poured into the hands. It should never be dipped from a wash-bowl, pail or other vessel and allowed to run back into it from the hands. The purpose is perfect cleanliness, and the water once used is supposed to be dirty and impure, and unfit to put on the skin a second time. Muslims in the East, when travelling, always carry with them a metallic vessel shaped like a coffee-pot, from which they pour the water into their hands when performing the Ablution.

Although this seems to be a very elaborate operation, it rarely takes more than two minutes for a Mussulman to perform the Woozoo. It is also a religious duty to keep the teeth clean, and wider brushes are not used, a fibrous stick is macerated at one end, the fibres forming a very good brush.

Among the sayings of the Prophet is this: "He who performs the Woozoo thoroughly will extract all sin from his body, even though it may be lurking under his fingernails."

When water cannot be procured, or its use would be injurious to health, the ablution may be performed with clean sand or dust.

This is called Tayammum.

Tayammum is explained as follows: "If anyone intending to perform Namaz cannot get water, or the water is at a distance of two miles or more, or he may be afflicted with a disease that makes it injurious for him to use water, he may make Tayammum on clean, pure ground and perform his Namaz. First, when he has made up his mind to perform Tayammum, he should place the palms of his hands on the ground, then rub his face with his hands; again, he should place both the palms of his hands on the ground and rub both his arms up to the elbows."

The seven essentials prior to Prayer are:

- (1) Purification of the body.
- (2) Cleanliness of clothing.
- (3) Cleanliness of the place where Namaz is performed.
- (4) To cover the nakedness of the body.
- (5) Punctuality in the times of prayer.
- (G) Facing the Kaaba.

(7) Making for oneself a definite idea as to the kind of prayer one is to perform Sunnah, Furz, Nuffle or Vitar.

In every mosque there is a tank or well and all the necessary appurtenances for the Ablution.

THE AZAN: Call to prayer:

We can now proceed to the regular order of prayer.

Before each prayer the Azan or call, is made by the Muezzin, or crier, from every mosque. Where there is no mosque and several Muslims are gathered together for prayer in the field, woods or highway, the call is made by one of their number selected by the others. In the mosque the Muezzin, who is regularly appointed for the purpose, makes the call always, lie ascends to the minaret and, placing the thumbs behind the lobes of the ears, with the palms of the hands turned forward, he calls out, in a loud, resonant voice:

Allaho Akobar! Allaho Akobar! Allaho Akobar! Allaho Akobar!

Ashado Allah illaha illala; Ashado Allah illaha illala.

Ashado annar Mohammedur resoul Allah; Ashado annar Mohammedur resoul Allah.

Hayya alas Allah [turning the head to the right), Hayya alas Allah.

Hayya allal Fallah [turning the head to the left), Hayya allal fallah.

Assallahto Kyrum min nome; Assallahto Kyrum min nome.

Allaho Akobar! Allaho Akobar!

La illaha ilala.

This is the call for the Fajr., or first morning prayer, and differs from the call for the other prayers in middle line: "Assallahto Kyrum min nome" (Prayer is better than sleep).

The above is the Arabic, as near as it can be represented in the Roman letters. Following is a literal translation of the Azan into English:

God is great! God is great! God is great! God is great!

I bear witness that there is no god but God; I bear witness that there is no god but God.

I bear witness that Mohammed is the Apostle of God; I bear witness that Mohammed is the Apostle of God.

Come to prayers! Come to prayers!

Come to salvation! Come to salvation!

Prayer is better than sleep; Prayer is better than sleep.

God is great! God is great!

There is no god but God! There is no god but God!

While the Azan is being made the faithful range themselves in a straight line, elbow touching elbow, facing toward the Kebla, or Mecca, the holy city of Arabia. In America, the Kebla is directly east. In India they turn their faces to the west in prayer, Mecca being in that direction. Perfect system and regularity characterised all the teachings of the Prophet, and it was, probably, in pursuance of this idea that a Kebla was chosen, instead of allowing his followers to face in all directions in an irregular way. The fixing of the Kaaba secured unanimity and the highly beneficial results accruing therefrom. Five times a day the hearts of millions of devout human beings are turned toward Mecca, together with the devout prayers of millions of earnest souls. This is an expression of that close fraternity which is such a striking feature of the Islamic system.

At the conclusion of the Azan, and after the Muezzin has taken his place among the worshippers, he repeats the similar lines which is exactly the same as the regular Azan except that the words, "Prayers are now ready," with his hands hanging loosely by his side, each worshipper now slowly says the Niyah, or Intention, as follows which in English means: "I intend to offer my Furz (or Sunnat) prayers to the Almighty God while I turn my face to the Kaaba."

It should be remembered that there is no difference between Furz and Sunnat prayers except in the intention. That is to say, a Furz prayer is obligatory, and the same prayer said a second, third or fourth time is called Sunnat, Nuffle or Vitar, as the case may be. For instance, the worshipper declares in the Niyah, or Intention, that he will say two Rahaats Furz; when he has finished he may say he will repeat two Rakaats Siuinat and still use the same prayer he has just finished repeating.

This explanation is necessary to avoid the confusion that naturally arises in the mind of the inexperienced convert to Islam. He is liable to infer that Furz, Sunnat, Nuffle and Vitar are different prayers in their verbal construction, when, in reality, they are only Furz, Sunnat, Nuffle or Vitar, because the worshipper verbally or mentally declares them so.

Another fact which should be borne in mind is that there are no regularly prescribed words to be used in prayers, except in the Takhir (God is Great), the Niyah, or Intention, the Niku, the Tasmi, the Sijdah, the Jalsah, the Tahiyah, the Taalihud and the Salaam, which are very brief and will be explained further on. Any verse or sura of the Holy Koran may be repeated as a prayer, although it is usual to repeat the Sura Fatiha, or first chapter in the Furz prayer. Having repeated the Intention, with the hands hanging loosely at the sides, the worshipper slowly and reverently says the Takbir: God is Great! (Allaho Akbar!)

This is generally said while the hands are being raised slowly to the head, with the palms turned forward and the thumbs pressed behind the lobes of the ears, as in accompanying cut. Sometimes the Takbir is not said until the hands are placed in the position indicated. It is generally considered the better way to place the hands in position before saying the Takhir. After this is said they are slowly lowered and crossed on the abdomen just below the naval, the right resting upon the left.

The prayer is then repeated.

A very acceptable form, which includes the Sura Fatiha is given as follows:

Holy art thou O God!

I worship and praise Thee.

Blessed is Thy name and exalted is Thy dignity.

There is no God but Thee!

The Sura Fatiha.

In the name of the Most Merciful God!

Praise be unto God, the Lord of Creation,

The All-Merciful, the 'All-Compassionate,

Ruler of the Day of Reckoning.

Thee do we worship and to Thee do we pray for help.

Direct us in the right way. In the way of those to whom thou hast been gracious; Not in that of those who are the objects of wrath, Or who walk in error.

[The worshipper may now repeat other Suras of the Holy Koran, as many as he chooses; the 112th Sura: "The Unity," is usually repeated, after the Sura Fatiha, as follows :]

Say: God is one God, the Eternal God, He begetteth not, neither is He begotten; And there is not anyone like unto Him.

Then follows the Takbir: Allaho Akobar!

THE RUKU.

While saying the Takbir, at this point, the worshipper drops his hands, bends slowly forward in a stooping posture, placing his hands upon his knees. This is called the Ruku.

While in this position he repeats: Holy is my God, the Great! Holy is my God, the Great! Holy is my God, the Great! He then resumes the erect position with his hands hanging loosely by his sides, and while doing this he says: God listened to him who praised Him. Praise be to Thee, Our God! Allaho Akobar!

THE SIJDAH.

The worshipper then sinks to his knees, with his feet resting on the ends of the toes, and, falling forward, rests his forehead and hands upon the ground as seen in the accompanying cut.

Some Muslims hold that the nose, also, should touch the ground, and that the ends of the thumbs should touch the lobes of the ears. The usual practice, however, is to rest the hands flat on the ground with the fingers spread apart, while the forehead presses fully upon the ground. While in this position the worshipper says:

Holy is my God, the Highest!
Holy is my God, the Highest!
Holy is my God, the Highest!

The Imams and very devout Muslims generally repeat this sentence seven times while the ordinary worshipper repeats it only three times as above. At its conclusion he raises his body and sits back upon his calves and feet, the left foot resting on the toes and the right on its outer side. This position is very difficult for one who has not become accustomed to it, but those Muslims who have prayed from childhood declare that it is the most comfortable position they can assume. The recent convert usually takes the kneeling posture most comfortable to him and acquires the other through practice and observation. While sitting in this position, which is called the Jalsah, he repeats the Takbir: "Allaho Akobar!" (God is Great!) once, and then leans forward again laying his hands and forehead upon the ground while he repeats:

Holy is my God, the Highest!
Holy is my God, the Highest!
Holy is my God, the Highest!

This is the end of the Rakaat. Every time this formula is repeated, it is a Rakaat of Furz, Sunnat, Nuffle or Vitar, according to the declaration of the worshipper when he repeats the Intention.

Supposing that he is saying the Fajr Xamaz., or morning prayer, which should be two Rakaats Fiirz and two Sunnat. He repeats the above twice; then goes on with the Attahyat Ta lillah and Salaam and then returns and repeats the same formula twice for the two Rakaats Sunnat.

THE ATTAHYAT.

Having repeated the required number of Rakaats he remains seated on his feet (or if unaccustomed to that position he finds it painful or uncomfortable he may sit cross-legged, or in the most comfortable sitting posture) and, with his hands resting on his knees as seen in the following cut, he repeats the following:

Benedictions are for God,
And prayers and good works,
Be peace with thee, O Prophet,
And the grace of God and His blessings.
Be peace with us
And with the Servants of God who are good.

THE TASHAHHUD:

He then raises the forefinger of the right hand, while both hands still rest on his knees and says:

I declare that there is no God but one God,
And I declare that Mohammed is His servant and Apostle.
(The finger then falls to its former position.)

Oh, God! be gracious unto Mohammed
And unto the descendants of Mohammed,
As Thou wast gracious unto Abraham,
And unto the descendants of Abraham.
Indeed, Thou art praised and great.
Oh, Almighty! bless Mohammed
And the descendants of Mohammed,
As Thou didst bless Abraham
And the descendants of Abraham,
Indeed, Thou art praised and great.
Oh, Our God! give us goodness in this world.
And goodness in the world to come,
And save us from the punishment of fire,

THE SALAAM.

The face is then turned slowly to the right the worshipper saying :
Be peace with ye, and the mercy of God, (Or in Arabic, “ Assalam Aleikum wa rahmatullah)

And then, turning the face to the left, the worshipper says: Be peace with ye, and the mercy of God.
Almost every Muslims believes that two angels attend upon him, one on his right hand to record his good thoughts and acts, and the other on his left to record the evil ones. The general purpose of the Salaam is, therefore, apparent.

THE Dua or Munajat.

The Dua or Munajat is said to close all prayers, and may consist of any words of adoration or supplication that may occur to the worshipper. A chapter or verse from the Holy Koran is often used. While it is being said the hands are held up as high as the shoulders with the palms turned upward and inward toward the face, their outside edges touching, as in the accompanying cut. A usual form of supplication is the following:

O Lord! I supplicate Thee for firmness in faith.
And for direction toward rectitude;
And to assist me in being grateful to Thee,
And in adoring Thee in every good way.
And I supplicate Thee for an innocent heart.
Which shall not incline to wickedness.
And I supplicate Thee for a true tongue.
And for that virtue which Thou knowest.
And I pray Thee to defend me from that vice which Thou knowest.
And for forgiveness of those faults which Thou knowest.
O my Defender! Assist me in remembering Thee,
And in being grateful to Thee,
And in worshipping Thee with all my strength.
O Lord! If I have injured my own soul, and no one can pardon the faults of Thy servants but Thee!
Forgive me out of Thy loving kindness and have mercy on me;
For, verily. Thou art the forgiver of offences.
And the bestower of blessings on Thy servants.
Allaho Akobar.

It will be seen that the tone of the prayers is of adoration and supplication for spiritual help, and not for any material benefits.

It is usual, at the close of the prayer, for the worshippers to clasp each other's hands, or embrace, as an indication of a renewal and strengthening of the bond of fraternity that binds them together and to God.

Study of Islam:

A very minute study in which specific origin of Islamic religion has been explored, which is related not only to Muslim community matters, but also to the whole humanity. Although Islam is the last divine guidance and the Holy book Quran was revealed in Arabic language upon the Arab prophet Muhammad, however, its rules and Islamic laws conferred upon him were for all the mankind i.e. Muslims as well as non-Muslims community. In present study the main theme of Islamic humanity as compare to that of Magna Carta thought in the field of human rights is deliberated. Islamic humanity comprises various pillars which include peace, tranquillity in society, good governance, recognition and mutual protection, obligations, endurance and tolerance in society. Moreover, emphasis of education, knowledge and truthfulness in business transaction in daily affairs are the basic merits of Islam. These pillars of Islamic Sharia are the lime-lights of socio-economic development in a society. Thus, the phenomenon of Islam regarding peace, values and practices, is investigated thoroughly with the help of available literature. In this research article, attempt has been made to define the characteristics of humanity in Islam from wider perspective. It is also investigated that a society will show positive effect if humanitarian virtues of Islam are implemented. Focus is made to project the ideal characteristics of humanity as spelled out under Islamic sharia, as well as its formation of ideal human society.

“Certainly will the believers have succeeded.” — Chapter al-Mu’minūn (Koran 23:1)

For some people, success is measured by the number of likes or compliments they receive on an Instagram post, or by the trendy clothes they are able to buy. For others, success might mean marriage to someone beautiful or wealthy, a dream job, or another worldly achievement. But let this verse be a reminder to them—and to you and me alike—about the true definition of success: Striving to remain spiritually healthy at a time when immorality and materialism is both desired and widespread. You have succeeded each time you: Commit to your prayers and submit to Allah despite any worldly distractions; Refrain from idle talk, ḥarām relationships, and immodest wear despite all of the temptations; Stay honest despite the corruption all around us. Those who adopt the above qualities are the “inheritors” Allah promises “will inherit al-Firdaws [the highest part of Paradise],” where “they will abide therein eternally.”

Fundamental philosophy of Islam rings on universal humanity. If so what kind of society Islam suggests to constitute? Whether there are some common components which Islam shares with other existing cultures of the world? What kinds of human rights Islam suggests to the human beings? This is the topic of research work that author intends to pursue. The Quran declares "All human beings are a single nation" (2:213). Prophet Muhammad in his message during his last address at Hajjatul Wadda categorically pointed out that Islam is for all human beings and for all the times to come, There are many misunderstandings that surrounded the Qur'an. It is often depicted as a book of violence and hatred that only pushes Muslims to blindly follow up. Many people who have not read the Qur'an or who do not understand enough about it to properly approach it are unable to understand its core messages. Not only does the Qur'an discourage this, it provides a guideline to engage the world and to find a purpose in life. One of the main ways it does this by making Humanity based knowledge and reason centre to religious pursuit. In other words, a major feature of the Qur'an is its emphasis on reason as a means to understanding this world and the Divine. Islam has laid down some universal fundamental rights for humanity as a whole which are to be observed and respected under all circumstances, whether such a person is resident with in the territory of Islamic state or outside. Whether he is at peace with state or at war. Islam has also laid down certain rights for the non-Muslims who may be living within the boundaries of an Islamic state. Despite of this it is very loudly and vociferously claimed that the world got the concept of basic human rights from the Magna Carta of Britain. Though the Magna Carta itself came into existence six hundred years after the advent of Islam. In present article attempt is made to explain and project the true concept of human rights in Islam.

“Do not follow the footsteps of Satan.” — Chapter al-Nūr (Koran 24:21) How your life goes is all about the steps you take. If you wish to cultivate a healthy lifestyle, for example, you will gradually stop all of your bad habits and

replace them with good ones until your good habits become a way of life. At first, you might only exercise once a week, then twice a week, and then every other day before you finally make it to the gym every day. If you wish to protect your heart from corruption: Don't stop your daily reading of the Koran... Don't stop waking up early to pray Fajr... Don't abandon the positive habits you already have, such as smiling to people, checking up on them, and visiting them or helping them as much as you can. Protect your tongue from gossip. Protect your eyes and ears from watching or listening to the things that are haram, and remember: Small steps often lead to bigger steps that create habitual changes that change the soul.

The Quran is the final word of Allah revealed to humanity through Prophet Muhammad. It was not meant to address the seventh century of Arab society, but to all human being, for all the times, Islam lays down the following rights for every human beings Muslim, Non-Muslim and man or woman on the base of humanity.

- (i) The right of life: The right of life is guaranteed by Allah to human. The holy Quran lays down in this regard. "Whoever kills a human being (without any reason like) manslaughter or corruption on earth, it is though he had killed all mankind" (5:32 A1 Quran). In other verses Quran Command "Do not kill souls which Allah has made sacred except to the due process of Allah" (6:151).
- (ii) The right to the safety of life.
- (iii) Respect for chastity of woman.
- (iv) The right to justice
- (v) Equity of human being.
- (vi) Co-chastity operation.
- (vii) Security of the property.
- (viii) The protection of honor.
- (ix) Rights of freedom.
- (x) Protection against tyranny.
- (xi) Freedom of expression.

In fact, the sense of the sacred is a very important concept for the humanitarian matters. Everything that is given by God is endowed with a kind of sacred quality. So that all resources given by God should be approached with a sense of respect and honor, the same kind of respect and honor that we give towards sort of classically sacred moments or objects. This nature of Islam's holy book brings along a continuous study of it, so that its injunctions are reinterpreted according to constantly changing times and conditions of our world.

Let us try to understand deeply the humanity and then its essence in Islam in this regard. Thus, humanity matters are related to the characteristics of mankind, rather than God or animals or pragmatic and empirical sciences. Vastly it is a rationalistic outlook or system of thought that attaches prime importance to human being, as compared to supernatural matters. That is in fact a renaissance cultural movement which turned away from medieval scholasticism and revived interest in ancient Greek and Roman thought. Humanitarian problems are also deal with social and economic issues in collective and personal matters of society. So Humanity is wide range interaction of human race affairs and natural universality issues. All cohabitants of planets work under and according to the natural laws and divine guidance. In this sense there is much similitude between the humanity and religion of Islam.

What is Islam?

Our aim is to understand the essence of Islam and its characteristic of humanity more comprehensively. "Islam" is an Arabic word. Literally it means "submission" or "surrender to Allah almighty". A Muslim is the one who follows or tries to follow the path of Islam. The term Muslim means one who submits to Allah almighty and surrenders to his will which is the natural law And the law of that who manages the whole universe and governs the human life. So in this sense acceptance of sovereignty of Allah in all spheres of life and his total submission for guidance in life, is the basic and fundamental condition to become a member of Muslim Ummah.

From the historical view point of Islam, Islam is the sum of truths and facts of life that have been taught by the sages and every prophet amongst all the nations of the world. Hence, the history of Islam in its simple basic form has always existed from the first day of Adam and Eve, subsequently preached by prophets and sages everywhere in the world and by those who are mentioned in the Holy Bible and the Holy Quran. In conceptual sense of Islam Ibrahim was a Muslim, Moses was a Muslim. Moses was commissioned to teach the fundamentals of personality through long chain of teachings and guidance of mankind, so to lead the people for all that was true is a great worth of task for human sake. Islamic culture has fundamental role in evolution of humanity and has deep effects in the field of creed and ideology, learning, art, statecraft, philosophy, literature in addition to mankind's spiritual advancement.

Islamic religion not only assisted those who came in its fold, but also prepared those other than Muslims to lead others nations on the righteous path. So Islam not existed for itself but for the entire humanity. Allah Almighty addresses all Muslims Ummah in Holy Quran "you are the best of peoples grown for mankind, enjoy what is right and avoid what is wrong and believe in Allah". (Quran- Alimran: 3:110).

These are the basic principles through which Islam promotes humanity. From its ethical perspective, Islamic culture stands on tangible stand of moral foundation. Islam binds its followers in unique and common brotherhood stand, regardless of their territorial attachment. In concept of oneness of Allah, Islam wipeout, polytheism and idolization in any conceivable form. This doctrine raises man position, frees and allows man from the bondage of monarchs, chieftains and from the hold of papacy, Brahmanism and hero worshipers. In short, Islam ensures the dignity on both levels, individual and collective side. Quran instructs human beings "Alone worship Allah and ask only for His help and mercy" (A1 Quran-al-Fathiha 1:03).

By studying Islamic civilization, it becomes clear that Islam unites the whole human being irrespective of race, colour and region. It resulted upon Islamic civilization that leads in the world level vindicating the dignity of mankind. "Lesser creation concept" is neglected in Islam at all. The Holy prophet said "All mankind is the family of Allah". In Islamic point of view man is descended from the primordial parents Adam and Eve. Variation in Muslim society and its division in tribe, races and nations are convenient labels which one can understand certain different characteristics of different people.

Before Allah, all Human being are equal. Allah commands" And he/she gets the most honor who is the most righteous. Allah Almighty states in Holy Quran "O mankind we created you from single pair of male and female and made you In to nations and tribes, So that you may know each other, verily the most honoured of you before Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you" (Alhujrath: 49). Islam commands to act upon the principles bestowed upon human being. These moral principles always been kept in view in governance, learning, craft, distribution of wealth, art, external affairs and family ties. Islam is practical code of ethics, which determine an equitable balance between right and duties. Allah has managed a program on earth to inter link all existed forces in regular ways. Allah prompts human beings to enhance harmony in society. Quran ordered "And do not make mischief on earth, after it has been set in harmony" (AlQuran Aaraf.7:56). Beside Allah has a complete catalogue of does and don'ts, which in view of Imam Shah Waliullah terminology calls, Fadail (qualities) and Razaail (vices). Based on these virtues, ones personality can be built. Four prime virtues are wisdom, courage, sobriety and justice. The rest of them like fear, love of God, bravery, performance of obligatory, self-respect, endurance, firmness, dignity, forgiveness, modest, contentment, tranquillity, sociability, piety etc. are derived from these four virtues. Vices are unethical practices of

natural tendency of man. These include lavishness, meanness, insult, cruelty, enthusiasm, slandering, etc. Islamic system of life promotes good virtues and eliminates vices from human society (Al Quran: alhajj22:41]. Tolerance is the most important aspect in Islamic paradigm which leads to quality of humanity in society.

“Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.” — Chapter al-Zumar (Koran 39:53) We feel happy when our loved ones forgive us for a mistake we made. But Allah does not only forgive us for our mistakes... He is “The Forgiving!” So, why is there so much despair in your heart? Do you think (Allāh forbid) that your sins can’t be forgiven? Don’t you feel happy when you learn that your Muslim sister started to wear the hijab? Or that someone started praying or stopped a haram act for the sake of Allah? Allah is even more delighted with your repentance! So, cheer up, and go make wuḍū’; it’s an important first step that helps start the process of washing away one’s sins.

“So whoever is guided - it is for [the benefit of] his soul; and whoever goes astray only goes astray to its detriment.”
— Chapter al-Zumar (Koran 39:41)

Praying five times a day is a continuous reminder that purifies you from engaging in acts that destroy the soul. Being fair, just, truthful, respectful, and kind to others gives you peace of mind and improves the quality of your sleep, in addition to making you gain the love of Allah and people. Wearing the hijab protects you from unpleasant interactions and improves your relationship with Allah. Fasting and reading the Koran shield your heart from spiritual illnesses like arrogance and selfishness. The path you take is your choice, and only you will bear its consequences. So, which path are you going to choose?

SLAVERY AND ISLAM:

Were Muslims pirates during the Barbary Slave Trade?

One of the many slanders on Muslim had been the mythical slave trade, which they supposedly carried out from 1500 to 1600. Approximately five hundred ships were attacked, pillaged and its crews enslaved during that time, but while those crimes did take place, historians now believe that Muslims were incapable of carrying out such a feat. No Muslim ship captain was capable of manoeuvring that kind of ship. Recently unearthed evidence show that those ships were likely manoeuvred by English captains, who often dressed in Muslim clothes and head dress to avoid being identified as English subjects, and therefore, enable their country and monarch to remain blame free in case of capture. Those pirates consisted of openly disgraced former English sailors, like Captain Jack, who took control of their former ships and continued a brutal reign of piracy in the sea. Another sedulously disseminated idea was that Muhammad was somehow a proponent of slavery but history proves otherwise.

Historians are unsure whether those criminal captains deliberately framed Muslims or was it an act of necessity for their survival, so their victims would never be able to identify them. From at least 1500, skilled pirates conducted raids on seaside towns of Italy, Spain, France, England, the Netherlands and as far away as Iceland, capturing men, women and children. Known as the Barbary pirates, these barbarous men raided ships traveling through the Mediterranean and along the northern and western coasts of Africa, plundering their cargo and enslaving the people they captured. Often, these men would plunder an island, enslave the entire population, and take the remaining inhabitants as prisoners. In 1551, a notorious pirate docked on the Maltese island of Gozo, and enslaved over five thousand men and women. Other pirates often beheaded thousands of men, and took women and children as slaves. The Balearic Islands were invaded by these same pirates in 1558, and 4,000 people were taken into slavery. Some of the pirate captains became open mercenaries and were sentenced to hefty jail sentences in Britain, so they often took their small crew along with the scuttled ships, and fled the country to avoid government regulation, and it was on the sea that those men often targeted their own ships. Between 1609 and 1616, England alone lost many merchant ships to men they believed were Barbary pirates. Those unfortunate victims who were kidnapped were then sold into slavery to various nations, and some captives were given to Arab merchants. Those prisoners who fell in Arab hands were regarded as individual citizens and were highly valued as fellow countrymen. Since Islam did not permit slavery, and regarded all humans to be equal, the people who were sold to them by the pirates were immediately freed. The women were adored and worshiped and many opted to marry their Muslim neighbours and refused to return to their country of origin.

Piracy gained momentum in the English world during the reign of Elizabeth I who often honoured famous pirates and took tributes from them. However, Queen Elizabeth I was an honourable woman, who did not approve of her men farming others for their crimes. There are thousands of historical evidences that the piracy in the sea and subsequent slavery of people were carried out by English sailors and their disgraced comrades. Men in Roanoke colonies were obsessed with seizing wealth from the Spanish, the French, even from their own countrymen. But while emotions get high, and memories become clouded in debates, the real question is whether Muslims were indeed slave traders as many critics suggests? The persecution of people from other races and religion was alien in Muslim culture, and historically, Islamic leaders, such as the ones who ruled Spain for seven hundred years, were believed to be fairly just and compassionate, and the Christians, Jews and Muslims lived in harmony in Muslim Spain. However, many Jewish historians lament that after the fall of the Muslim rulers, Spain became a hostile place for the Judaic community. In 1492, King Ferdinand II of Aragon and Queen Isabella I of Castille conquered the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada, after defeating the Muslims, and soon after, the monarchs issued the Alhambra Decree, mandating that all Jews be expelled from the country. Before that year, Ferdinand and Isabella had instituted the brutal Inquisition, an effort by Spanish clergy to rid the country of non-Christians. Pogroms, deadly acts of violence against Jews, and anti-Semitic laws had been features of Catholic Spain for over a century before the Alhambra Order, and it had caused many deaths among the Jewish population. At the same time, those who were suspected of practicing Judaism were forced to convert by extremely violent methods. Tomas de Torquemada, the Grand Inquisitor, was believed to have been one of the main architects of the persecution of the Jews. This persecution carried on for three hundred years, and after many decades of religious oppression, all remaining Muslims in the Crown of Castile were ordered to convert to Christianity or leave. Measures which had previously been taken against Jews, including the actions of the Inquisition, were applied to Muslims and they had to quit their homes. However, there is a possibility that those people who had seized power in Spain were likely members of the same group which had pretended to be Muslims during 1050, and had assassinated hundreds of Muslim leaders, and even banned the observing of five times prayer, and cancelled the annual pilgrimages of Muslims to the holy city of Mecca. Despite their obvious false beliefs, they had called themselves Muslim when perpetuating those crimes.

For Muslims, a recent trend had been to blame the Barbary slave trading on the Islamic religion, but historically, it can be proven that Muslim were not involved in the kidnapping and trading of men and women, nor did Muslim nations own sturdy ships that would enable such actions. However, it is possible that some group was also framing Muslims during that time.

Piracy, the act of seizing a ship or its cargo from its lawful owners or their agents, has been endemic to maritime nations ever since ships sailed upon the seas. When Queen Elizabeth Tudor ascended the throne in 1558, English piracy gained momentum, with freebooters roaming its coastal waters unchallenged, and targeted Spanish treasure ships. With each year, the plundering increased and spread to the waters of the Atlantic and to the Caribbean. All the ships carrying Spain's ever-increasing wealth were targeted by the English ships, because the English commerce depended on this loot. This business of piracy became profitable enterprise of piracy. Several times, this act of piracy escalated into a state of near war and utter anarchy.

During her reign, English captains openly looted Spanish and other merchant ships and used the money to fund English treasury. Occasionally, British captains would raid Spanish ships and find thousands of Muslims who were being enslaved or transported by the Spanish sailors to be sold, and in those cases, the English officers would immediately release the Muslim hostages and free them. Until Elizabeth's reign, all piracy was taking place in the sea with British ships, but with Elizabeth's accession this situation began to change. In 1562, Elizabeth's merchants reached the Persian Shah's court where they learned about the theological distinctions of Islamic beliefs, and returned to London to present the queen with a young Muslim secretary they named Sultana, and this began a Protestant-Islamic alliance, allowing British sailors to use and borrow Muslim ships for their trade and oftentimes, piracy.

Life sometimes takes us to strange places, and we frequently have to deal with complicated situations, personalities, challenges, and doubts—but the Koran resolves it all; if you are already a believer, it will deepen your belief, while if you harbour doubts of any kind, it will give you certainty and tranquillity, because it speaks directly to your mind. If you enjoy and benefit from this book, remember that this only a small glimpse into the eternal messages of the

Great Koran! May Allah accept this work and reward everyone who made it possible for this book to be published (and Allah is The Grantor of All Success).

“And thus do We save the believers.” — Chapter al-Anbiyā’ (Koran 21:88)

Don’t worry. Your financial issues will be solved. The illness that you or your loved ones have been suffering from is going to be alleviated. Harassment, oppression, psychological pressure, family problems, work problems... Personal problems... They shall all fade away if you are a believer in Allah! Turn to Allah, and He will save you... Just like He saved Prophet Yūnus (Jonah) (PEACE BE UPON HIM) from the fish that swallowed him... And just like He saved Prophet Mūsā (Moses) (PEACE BE UPON HIM) and the believers from the oppressive pharaoh of their time (Fir’awn).

The Barbary Slave Trade:

One of the popular myths that are presented as facts is about the trans-Atlantic slavery, which began in the early 1600 and continued under the reign of Elizabeth the first in England, where mercenary pirates from England and Spain often raided Muslim ships which were bound for the pilgrimage in Mecca and plundered their goods, and enslaved the women and children, often after executing the Muslim men.

This was an established historical fact and some historians even say that after seizing the Muslim ships, the pirates often posed as Muslims and looted other ships in order to prevent the blame of the piracy from falling on the English crown or preventing anyone from placing the blame on the Spanish king.

However, in this piracy event, where Muslims were the victims and suffered grievously, modern digital history pages on the social media falsely attributed the acts of piracy on the Muslims, and those video makers zealously insist that it was the Muslims who enslaved the European people and sold them into sex-slavery. This very notion is preposterous not only because Islam as a religion had outlawed slavery nearly fifteen hundred years ago, but the Muslim Prophet Muhammad had forbidden his adherents of ever taking anyone prisoner unless it was as prisoners of war and they too had to be freed upon paying ransom. Muhammad and his family freed over thirty-thousand slaves in his lifetime, and in his dying breath, begged all the people to free their slaves and servants. Falsely accusing any group of people for a crime has lingering consequences, and breeds only hatred. One such example of framing a certain religion for a crime they did not commit can be found among Muslims. Many people today accuse Muslims of being slavers, whereas the Islamic religion prohibits all form of slavery. The Atlantic slave trade has also been blamed on Muslims, especially during the 17th century. However, Muslims were the victims of many sea piracies that was going on at that time, and the Barbary slave trade was one such case.

In 1532, Sir John Hawkins was born in Plymouth into a wealthy and sea-faring family. Hawkins’ father was captain who traded overseas. Growing up, Hawkins would sail with his father on trading trips and learned about the sea, but his interest lay in slave trading. He was known as England’s first slave trader, but historians believe that he was not the first to bring slaves back to England but was one of the first to profit from the Triangle Trade, selling supplies to colonies ill-supplied by their home countries and the demand for African slaves in the Spanish colonies in the Americas. Historically, it is known that English pirates and other Spanish ships were involved in the brutal business of slave trading and looting, but some recent critics of Islam falsely accuse Muslims of being responsible for the slave trade, a practice forbidden by their faith. However, Muslim passenger ships were often the unfortunate victims of such piracy and slave trades, and many Muslims were killed and imprisoned while trying to embark upon the voyage to Mecca for annual pilgrimage.

The notorious pirate John Hawkins made hundreds of financially lucrative slave trade voyages in the 1560. In 1564, Queen Elizabeth I invested in him by leasing the 700-ton ship Jesus of Lübeck along with three smaller ships for a more extensive voyage. While some pirates who openly killed English sailors were imprisoned by the queen, jailbreaks and riots in support of alleged pirates were common throughout the British Empire during the late seventeenth century. Political leaders openly protected men who committed violent acts of piracy against opposing powers. Pirates were everywhere and they attacked everyone. Muslims, particularly those travelling from India to Mecca, became the brutal victims of this barbarity. But rather than punishing the pirates as anarchistic criminals, governments welcomed them, and colonial communities allowed them to marry respectable women. The infamous

pirate James Brown even married the daughter of the governor of Pennsylvania and was appointed to the Pennsylvania House of Assembly. In Elizabethan England, pirates flourished and were under the active protection of port communities in Devon and Cornwall, but they robbed other ships using their own English identities, and it was only upon the ascension of James I that began a new trend within the plunder economy. Pirates who had once sailed in English ships were now asked to camouflage their identities with colour of foreign and enemy states, and Muslims were often framed, meaning many pirates wore turbans and other headdresses to make the target ship think they were Muslims, and not English. The pirates were very famous, and Puritan communities in Ireland, as well as the colonies of Jamestown, Bermuda, New Plymouth, and Boston all supported these unlawful sea marauders. In 1680, pirates who plundered along the Spanish Main and the coasts of Chile and Peru anchored in the North American colonies, and hundreds of pirates used these colonial ports to head to the Indian Ocean, basing themselves on the island of Madagascar, and loot Muslim ships and enslave all women and children there. Their primary goal was to capture Muslim people for sale as slaves or for ransom but they also looted the cargo of ships they captured. Many disgraced Spanish, American or English captains, dressed as Muslim pirates, operated out of the main ports along the North African coast, including Algiers and Tripoli, raiding towns and seizing merchant ships across the Mediterranean, and West Africa.

While there are instances where Turks or other Muslims had imprisoned other pirates who tried to loot their properties, but they were no more slaves than the modern-day prisoners in the United States, where over eleven million people pass through the jail-system each year, and live under poor conditions with only minimum hygiene, and they do not even have the right to ransom themselves free.

There may have been some instances of European women settling in Muslim majority nations during the 1700s, chiefly in the Turkish-speaking regions, but they were not sex slaves as most media outlets tried to portray, but Muslim historians say that those women willingly remained with the Muslims and married the men and lived honourable lives as free women. A few instances of imprisonment of European took place in Turkey, but it was at a time when most of the Turkish people of Constantinople were still strict adherents of their Christian faith, and did not practice Islam. A handful did pretend to convert to Islam in order to gain sympathy from the Arabs, but nevertheless, the slavery of European people was not an Islamic crime.

But the false narratives persist, and the hypocrisy of the media is apparent when these anecdotes are repeated. There has been enough hatred preached in the last twenty years to make every nation in the world want to obliterate and kill all Muslims.

Who were the victims of this slave trade?

Hundreds of Elizabethan men and women travelled into Muslim lands in search of their fortune, and many converted willingly to Islam. They included British merchants and scholars. Elizabeth's alliances with the Ottoman, Persian and Moroccan empires also brought elite Muslims to London, since it was around this time that thousands of Muslims were expelled from southern Spain and many more were captured and forced to become slaves for the Spanish elites. Records show that Turkish diplomats were sent over in the 1580s, and they too traded with the English, and in 1585, Protestant England created the Barbary Company by which the English merchants would sell wool and munitions, and in later years, this same company ships were used by disgraced and exiled English captains to profit by raiding and seizing natives from Asia and Africa and selling them into slavery. However, until today, many historians wrongly blame this human trafficking on the Muslims and claim that the Barbary Company's slave trade was where Muslim merchants allegedly stole European women and sold them into slavery. However, slavery was never permitted in Islam, and Muslims knew it was forbidden to capture or enslave anyone under any circumstance, and only in cases of open warfare were Muslims permitted to take prisoners of war, but they had to be released upon the payment of bail money, which was also erroneously called the ransom money. For many years, the English sailors used ships labelled as Barbary Company to raid Spanish or other European ships and captured all occupants and often sold them into slavery, and in order to ensure the Spanish royals never take revenge on England, they used the Barbary label pretending to be either a Turk or Moroccan ship, so that the Spanish forces would direct their anger on the Muslims rather than on the English.

After Elizabeth's death, her successor James I's made a decision to make peace with Catholic Spain, so he forbade his sailors to openly raid Spanish ships as they had done in the Elizabethan period, and this led to subterfuge, causing the disgraced or exiled British captains to conduct their piracy under the guise of Muslims, and some even

employed a handful of Muslims who owed them their lives for freeing them from Spanish slavery. In those cases, the British officers used the Muslim ships to conduct their looting and as a result, the blame for the piracy and subsequent slave trade became erroneously known as a Muslim crime, although no Muslim state, race or government ever sanctioned it. In 1589 the Moroccan ambassador met with the British queen and tried to gain her help in halting the slave trade which was being carried out by the Spanish, who had illegally captured free Muslim men and enslaved them for life.

Muslims have been a part of Britain and its history even before the reign of Elizabeth the First, and upon her death in 1603, when the crown passed to James VI of Scotland, piracy in the sea increased ten-fold, but James was not as honourable as his aunt, and he forbade English captains to publicly announce their piracy. In a stealthy operation, all English captains were to wear eastern clothes and their ships were painted in Muslim colours and they proceeded to do piracy and terrorism framing Muslims, presumably to avoid potential revenge attacks from Spain and other European nations. Thousands of Arabs were enslaved by the Spain's kingdom and were often forced to do hard labour in fields, and one Moroccan monarch who tried to free his Muslim compatriots arrived in London, had his portrait painted, met Elizabeth and her advisor numerous times and sought her assistance to free Arabs who were enslaved by the Spanish government. It is believed that Elizabeth once even proposed a joint Protestant-Islamic invasion of Spain and naval attack on the American colonies. Elizabeth gave up on the plan at the last minute only because she feared upsetting the Ottomans, who were at the time Morocco's adversaries. During the Elizabethan era, the common enemy of both Arabs and English was the King of Spain and on several occasions, Arab merchants sailed in British ships. One Moroccan ambassador had actually sailed in an English fleet that later attacked Lisbon.

Tens of thousands of Muslims were captured and enslaved in the Barbary slave trades but they were falsely accused of being the slave catchers, rather than being recognised as the victims, but it is not Muslims alone who are framed for crimes. Thousands of White Catholic priests are framed each year for crimes they did not commit. These chaste men who had taken vows of celibacy and poverty are falsely accused of heinous crimes. Despite having a pure soul, and wanting only to better the lives of others, these men are charged with molesting children, and many are killed each year by their own parishioners who believe them to be demonic. These priests are good-hearted men, who offered their peers and neighbours a sparkle of light in the life ahead, but after sacrificing their youthhood, their lives and their time to protect children and campaign against child abuse, many priests have been wrongly convicted of sex crimes and incarcerated for speaking the truth, possibly because they are white religious men.

What is the justice in causing the suffering of so many pious men who have sacrificed themselves and gave everything they have for the good of humanity?

However, like many stories in history, this myth of Muslim slavery lived on, and like modern-day terror groups like ISIS, which were created and funded by foreign mercenaries including Israeli and French intelligence officers, people still think that Muslims were responsible for those horrors. Some historians wondered how the idea of Muslim piracy and barbary slave trade even gained the slightest credibility, especially because no Muslim could have become so skilled in navigating the seas. King James had his reasons not to want attention, because during those years, Spain and other European nations were constantly blaming England and attacking their ships and stealing their merchandise.

Queen Elizabeth allowed her captains to engage in piracy, as long as they did not attack English ships, but internal conflicts still took place. Documents from the reign of Elizabeth I contain hundreds of complaints of piracy and petitions for compensation but acts of piracy were not punished. However, in 1573, pirates seized a ship bearing the Earl of Worcester, in the Straits of Dover. The pirates killed nearly twenty of the Earl's retainers and stole his property. The Queen was upset with this incident, and hundreds of known pirates were subsequently rounded-up and jailed, but later, most of them were set free.

This piracy did not end in looting alone, and soon, several outlawed English captains like Hawkins and Drake joined forces with their former Spanish enemy and started a headlong race for wealth and glory.

Queen Elizabeth did not have the naval power to match Spain at sea, so she needed these pirates to loot Spanish ships in order to fund her country's military. She turned a blind eye to the details of piracy, and the English captains began their smaller operations and entered the lucrative transatlantic slave trade, seizing people in West Africa to sell in the Americas. Drake and Hawkins participated in all of the operations to purchase and kidnap hundreds of people from local rulers in Sierra Leone. However, it was this same Drake who had initially come across the Spanish slave trades during his piracy activities, because during 1500, Spanish forces were habitually kidnapping and enslaving

thousands of Muslims in various parts of the world, and in 1586, Francis Drake returned to England from Colombia with a hundred Turks who had been captured by the Spanish in the Mediterranean and press-ganged into slavery in the Americas.

Following the success of the first expedition, Elizabeth and members of her privy council invested in the next two trips, financially benefiting from the sale of people as chattel. However, there were no Muslim captains of Islamic pirate ship involved in these unpleasant trades of humans, but this has often been falsely blamed on Muslims, the same way ISIS and Taliban are carrying out dastardly crimes and blaming on the religion of Islam.

While slavery have been banned in Islam since the advent of Islam which was propagated by Muhammad, piracy and slavery was still active during 16th and 17th century. Officially, the Elizabethan stance was to publicly deplore piracy, but the privy council was willing to turn a blind eye to the pillaging and the Crown considered rogue pirates and criminals as patriot-heroes as long as their plundering was directed against the enemies of England. Pirates were often under the patronage and protection of influential men who were themselves involved in the illegal slave trade.

The untruthful molestation cases against Muslims and their prophet are becoming an endemic, with more and more fraudulent historians coming up with false accusations. The reputation of thousands of upstanding, chaste Muslim priests, even ones who have been long deceased, are being irreparably tarnished with the uncorroborated claims by fraudulent people.

The slavery of the pagans was a patriarchal institution, coeval with the very dawn of history. It is an institution allowed and modified by Moses for people in that stage of civilisation required it, but all forms of slavery had been disallowed and completely prohibited by Mohammed. He tried to do away with slavery by force, and hence it is a mistake to suppose that slavery ever received any sanction either from Moses or Mohammed. Moses ordered the man-stealer and the man-seller to be put to death. Mohammed is reported to have said, 'The worst of men is the seller of men.'

Slave Trade and the Muslim victims of Piracy:

Despite numerous historical evidence that Muslims did not enslave blacks or whites, many people in this era false attribute the transatlantic slavery to Islam, but they fail to notice that slavery was not even permitted in the Muslim's religion.

According to Islamic jurists, the Muslim prophet Muhammad stipulated that for every sin a person did, they had to free a slave, and it was a compensation for every crime. His entire life, Muhammad ordered his friends to free slaves, and his closest and dearest friend was an Ethiopian slave who was captured and tortured by the pagans, and after Muhammad secured his freedom, and freed him permanently, the man came to be known as the Finance Minister of Islam. He was Bilal bin Rabah, the most honoured man in Islam, who Muhammad had declared, that would enter the Paradise even before Muhammad himself could enter it. At a time when Africans and blacks were considered inferior, Muhammad ensured that men like Bilal was given due honour and privileges.

When Muhammad returned to Mecca after many years, he instructed Bilal to climb atop the sacred temple of Abraham, known to Arabs as the Ka'ba, and gave him the honour of calling the Believers to prayer.

In addition to Bilal, the Muslim prophet Muhammad had numerous friends among the black population. He not only freed all the slaves from bondage, but also adopted them into his own family. His adopted mother was Barakah, a black freed slave, who was often referred to as Prophet Muhammad's Ethiopian Mother. Barakah, Muhammad's black mother was the first person to lay hands on the Muhammad when he was born and although she was an Ethiopian teenager, Muhammad's mother Ameena looked after Barakah as if she was her daughter. So, Barakah was raised among them and later raised Muhammad as her own child. At the age of 25, when Muhammad married Khadeejah, he said to her: "This is Barakah, she is my mother after my mother, and soon, Barakah married a young man named Zaid, who was in love with her, and the couple had a child. Due to his dark complexion, Aisha, who Muhammad was coerced into marrying, despised the child but Muhammad always counselled Aisha and ordered her to treat the child with love and respect. Barakah and Zaid were deeply in love, and the little boy Barakah gave birth to was Usama, a dark-skinned emotional child, who Muhammad loved more than life itself and adopted as his own

son. When Aisha once chided and rebuked the little Usama for having a running rose, Muhammad immediately went to his and used his own shawl to clean the mucus from the child's face.

With the passing years, Muhammad attained marked success in business and when about twenty-six years old, married one of his employers, a wealthy widow more than fifteen years his senior. The widow, Khadeejah by name, was apparently somewhat mercenary for, finding her young business manager most efficient, she resolved to retain him in that capacity for life! Khadeejah was a woman of exceptional mentality and to her integrity and devotion must be ascribed the early success of the Islamic cause. By his marriage Muhammad was elevated from a position of comparative poverty to one of great wealth and so exemplary was his conduct that he became known throughout Mecca as "the faithful and true."

Muhammad would have lived and died an honoured and respected Meccan had he not unhesitatingly sacrificed both his wealth and social position in the service of the God, whose voice he heard while meditating in the cavern on Mount Hira. Year after year Muhammad climbed the rocky and desolate slopes of Mount Hira (since called the Mountain of light) and here in his loneliness, cried out to God to reveal anew the pure religion of Adam, that spiritual doctrine lost to mankind through the dissensions of religious factions. Khadeejah, solicitous over her husband's ascetic practices which were impairing his physical health, sometimes accompanied him in his weary vigil, and with womanly intuition sensed the travail of his soul. At last, one night in his fortieth year as Muhammad lay upon the floor of the cavern, enveloped in his cloak, a great light burst upon him. Overcome with a sense of perfect peace and understanding in the blessedness of the celestial presence, he lost consciousness. When he came to him- self again, the Angel Gabriel stood before him, and from him, Muhammad gained the basic doctrines later embodied in the Koran. Then Gabriel spoke in a clear and wonderful voice, declaring Mohammed to be the Prophet of the living God.

In awe and trembling, Mohammed hastened to his wife Khadeejah, fearing the vision to have been inspired by the same evil spirits who served the pagan magicians so greatly despised by him. Khadeejah assured him that his own virtuous life would be his protection and that he need fear no evil. Thus reassured, the Muhammad, now a prophet, awaited further visitations from Gabriel. When these did not come, however, such a despair filled his soul that he attempted self-destruction, only to be stopped in the very act of casting himself over a cliff by the sudden reappearance of Gabriel, who again assured Muhammad that the revelations needed by his people would be given to him as necessity arose.

The 17th chapter of the Koran speaks of a certain night where Muhammad was transported from the temple at Mecca to that of Jerusalem, but no details are given of the strange journey and Muhammad was made to describe his ascent through the seven heavens into the icy presence of the heavens and the veiled God. Muslims believe that Muhammad was awakened in the night by the Angel Gabriel, who, after removing the Prophet's heart, washed the cavity with Zaman water, and filled the heart itself with faith and science. A strange creature, called 'the lighting bolt,' was brought for the conveyance of the Prophet. The ride was described as white animal of the shape and size of a mule. According to some Islamic versions, Muhammad merely rode the animal to Jerusalem, where, dismounting upon Mount Moriah, he caught hold of the lower rung of a golden ladder lowered from heaven and, accompanied by Gabriel, ascended through the seven spheres separating the earth from the inner surface of the empyrean. At the gate of each sphere stood one of the Patriarchs, whom Muhammad saluted as he entered the various planes. At the gate of the first heaven stood Adam; at the gate of the second, John and Jesus and at the third Joseph at the fourth, Enock at the fifth, Aaron; at the sixth, Moses; and at the seventh, Abraham. Upon reaching this Point, Muhammad is said to have requested Jesus no intercede for him before the throne of God.

On the occasions when the various chapters of the Koran were dictated, Muhammad is said to have fallen unconscious, and, regardless of the chill of the surrounding air, to have been covered with beads of perspiration. Often these attacks came without warning: at other times he would sit wrapped in a blanket to prevent a chill from the copious perspiration, and while apparently unconscious would dictate the various passages which a small circle of trusted friends would either commit to memory or reduce to writing. On one occasion in later life, when Abu Bakr referred to the grey hairs in his beard, Muhammad, lifting the end of his beard and looking at it, declared its whiteness to be due to the physical agony attendant upon his periods of inspiration.

If the writings attributed to Mohammed be considered as merely the hallucinations of an epileptic-and for that reason discounted- his Christian detractors should beware lest with the doctrines of the Prophet they also undermine the very teachings which they themselves affirm, for many of the disciples, apostles, and saints of the early church are known to have been subject to nervous disorders. Mohammed's first convert was his own wife, Khadeejah, who

was followed by other members of his immediate family, a circumstance which moved Sir William Muir to note: "It is strongly corroborative of Muhammad's sincerity that the earliest converts to Islam were not only of upright character, but his own bosom friends and people of his household, who, intimately acquainted with his private life, could not fail otherwise to have detected those discrepancies which ever more or less exist between the professions of the hypocritical deceiver abroad and his actions at: home."

Indeed, so perfect was his behaviour towards his friends and family, that among the first to accept the faith of Islam was Abu Bakr, Muhammad's closest and most faithful friend. Abu Bakr, a man of brilliant attainments, contributed materially to the success of the Prophet's enterprise, and in accord with the express wish of the Prophet, became the leader of the faithful after Muhammad's death.

Quietly, but industriously, Muhammad promulgated his doctrines among a small circle of powerful friends. When the enthusiasm of his followers finally forced his hand and he publicly announced his mission, he was already the leader of a strong and well-organized faction. Fearing Muhammad's growing prestige, the people of Mecca, waiving the time-honoured tradition that blood could not be spilt within the holy city, decided to exterminate Islam by assassinating Muhammad. All the different groups combined in this undertaking so that the guilt for the crime might thereby be more evenly distributed. Discovering the danger in time, Muhammad left his friend Ali in his bed and fled with Abu Bakr from the city, and after adroitly eluding the Meccans, joined the main body of his followers that had preceded him to Yathrib (afterwards called Medina). Upon this incident, is based the Islamic chronological system.

It was public knowledge that Muhammad loved black people excessively and did not permit anyone of his followers to keep African people as slaves or servants. He even forgave those black men who had tried to assassinate him and his family. The famous example of the black assassin who brutally murdered Muhammad's favourite uncle is narrated in Muslim narrations, where the Islamic prophet readily forgave the man who killed his uncle Hamza, and mutilated the body, and cut out the liver to gift it to his mistress as a proof of death. But even such a heinous crime was overlooked by Muhammad, who loved the Black population of Arabia.

To be fair, Elizabeth Tudor, the Queen of England, initially made sporadic attempts to bring English piracy under control but she was unsuccessful and soon, even English shipping was disrupted by those pirates who were busy enslaving Caribbeans and African natives and selling them to slavery. Often, these pirates attacked Muslim ships and enslaved all those who were in those ships. Moses Butterworth was one of the men who had joined a crew that sailed the Indian Ocean intent on plundering ships of the Muslim Mughal Empire. For many years, young men based in England or her colonies, he had joined these pirate groups that existed solely to rob Muslim ships which carried pilgrims to Mecca, and often, all the Muslim women and children were sold into slavery and the men were murdered. However, it is strange that some distorted version of history attempted to blame the piracy on the Muslim victims who had only suffered unspeakably and never looted a single ship. In 1701, the pirate Butterworth embarked in New Jersey, and was arrested for looting and murdering numerous civilian ships, and he was accused of piracy and languished in jail. Throughout the 1690s, these pirates attacked and looted Muslim vessels laden with gold, jewels, silk, and calico on pilgrimage toward Mecca. After achieving great success, some of them returned to England, while the majority of the men sailed back into the Atlantic via Madagascar to the North American seaboard, where they quietly disembarked in Charleston, Philadelphia, New Jersey, New York City, Newport, and Boston, and made themselves at home. Slave trading is a bitter section of human history, whose victims ranged from Africans to Europeans, Asians, Arabs and Muslims, but in recent years, some 17th century Muslim leaders have been accused of enabling slave trade. This is historically inaccurate, since many Muslim ships were raided by foreign and English pirates at a regular basis. However, it is likely that some Turkish individuals may have been involved in the slave trades, but it was a time in history when Turkey was the centre of Christianity, and Constantinople was considered a Christian hub. It was only many years later that some Turks began to convert to Islam, but some Muslim Arabs believe that the Turks converted to Muhammad's religion only to exert influence over the Arabs and take over the leadership of the Arab world. This largely worked and within a hundred years, the new converts in Turkey manifested as the Ottoman Empire and tried to control the Arab States, often with brutal discipline. However, most Muslim agree that many Turkish leaders were not adherents of Islam, and they pretended to convert only to seize power. While there have been a handful of genuine Muslim converts, for hundreds of years, the majority of the Turkish leaders have largely been non-Muslims, and they had implemented a constitutional principle of official secularism. This allowed the Turkish government to ban all Islamic practices, prayers and religious schools, and even reading the Koran was prohibited. Traditionally, Turkish leaders also forbade Muslim women from covering their bodies, and banned women who wore headscarves from working or attending school. These

longstanding prohibitions of wearing Muslim clothes or modest dresses was only removed in 2013, so many historians suspect that the alleged involvement of Turkey in the slave trade of the 16th century may have been due to their unislamic practices and Christian or pagan customs, but after many Turks converted to Islam in recent years, many modern critics associated their criminal actions with the Islamic religion of Muhammad.

DID MUHAMMAD HAVE SEX WITH SLAVES?

It is easy to hate someone. Some biased writer can publish a book and speak a lie about Catholic priests or Muslim clerics, and soon, a person might get an idea to frame that particular denomination. Why would a group like ISIS, that claims to be Muslim, decided to kill and enslave only Muslims? It seems as though the same way Barbary slave trades have been blamed on Muslims, the terror groups we see today are merely repeating history. People who framed Muslims from the slave trades are akin to the very people who have created these false groups to make Islam look like a violent religion. Like the Muslims who were framed for the Barbary slave trade, Muslims today are being framed for another hoax slave trade, and this thought is disturbing. I am genuinely terrified to see Muslim slave trade framing go on all over again, because it frightens me to think that someone or some group might similarly target another race or population of the world. If you want to hate someone, you can bring back hundred-year-old stories, and make thousands of hate videos. And if you want, you can forget about all historical myths and inaccurate narratives, and forget all race and all religion and do justice between them.

Muhammad, the founder of Islam, was a simple man, and a humble prophet, but he is often mistaken as a legislator and a conqueror, and yet, there are people who see that there may be an appeal to the Mohammed of Mecca from the Mohammed of Medina because in Mecca he was never more fallible, though certainly never more pained and sincere. For Muslims, Muhammad was a perfect mirror of all the primary attribute of the Eternal as he was awash with mercy and compassion.

If a sympathetic study is conducted of Islam, one would find that there is the absolute equality of man before God and as Muhammad clarified, there is the sense of the dignity of human nature and the utter simplicity of life, and the vivid belief in God's providence, the entire submission to His will, and last, not least, there is the courage of heavenly convictions, the fearless avowal before men of their belief in God, and their pride in its possession as the one thing needful. One cannot fail to notice that there is, in the lives of average Muslims, less of self-indulgence, less of the mad race for wealth, less of servility, than is to be found in the lives of average pagan, heathen or non-Muslims, because Muhammad taught his friends to dwell more upon the inherent dignity of human nature, whereby they can rejoice in the success of the other, with each Muslim supplying the other's wants for the common good of humanity.

Some historian falsely reported that Muslims were responsible for enslaving millions of people of trading them in the so-called Barbary slave trades, but the truth is they had been victims of the very thing they were accused of and Mecca-bound Muslim ships were regularly attacked by English, French, Spanish and American pirates, but this rumour has caused thousands of people to create films, videos, article and news reports to spread hate against all Muslims, and accuse them of killing and enslaving millions of Europeans. The preaching of hatred, whether true or false, using history or false narratives, is the worst thing a human could do, especially in a nuclear world. People who quote a historian or reporter who came five hundred years ago, or quote a person who repeated uncorroborated claims should not be believed blindly, because it does not mean he spoke the truth. It is a good thing that after being attacked by the Crusaders for so many years, the Muslim community decided not to hold on to past grudges, and they forgave the Crusaders soon after the Mongol invaders came. If Muslims also preached hatred to one another, bringing up past atrocities which may or may not have taken place, then the preaching of hate would have destroyed the world.

One of the common tirades against Muslims is their prophet Muhammad. For fifteen hundred years, Muhammad have been accused of being various things, and like our Catholic priests, he too was and is still unjustly accused of paedophilia, but in recent years, a news trend begun in the media to brand Muhammad as a man of violence, who enslaved people and perhaps, even perpetuated slavery.

However, critics of Islam care little to find out the truth about these allegations, and Muslim scholars insist that Islam was the first religion to declare every human being born to be equal in the eyes of God, and as such, there was

no slavery in Islam; Muhammad allowed only prisoners to be captured in war, but they were always freed, because there was no ransom in Islam, only bail.

One thousand four hundred and fifty years ago, when Muhammad appeared in Arabia, he nullified and negated the concept of slavery. It was his decree that no ruler or progenitor was allowed to treat his subjects or offspring as his slaves. Every individual was bestowed with well-defined rights; the ruler and the ruled, the progenitor and the offspring had to live within the limits prescribed by religion; no one could transgress those limits.

Some historians claim that Islam was one of the first religions to abolish slavery and name every man and woman equal in the sight of God, and stipulated that everyone was born free. There was no slavery system in Islam until pagans started taking Muslims as slaves- those Muslims who were not protected by powerful tribes were captured and sold to enemies who killed, tortured and persecuted them mercilessly.

Finally, Muhammad allowed Muslims to take captives only in wars, and that too under complex rules which included that prisoners of war must be treated gently, and must be fed the same foods his captors ate, must be clothed in the same fabric, and lodged in a similar housing. Muhammad's religion also drastically restricted war, by allowing enslavement only in a war fought against unbelieving and unjust enemy. In no other way could anyone be enslaved under Muhammad's directives. At the same time, Muhammad introduces tenets of Islam which raised the status of slavery to that of a free man; and opened many ways for their emancipation. Muhammad also made it clear that in Islam, no one was permitted to have sexual relations with their slaves. However, in countries throughout Europe, North America and Australia, it was a commonplace occurrence and also sanctioned by government laws to sexually assault their slaves, especially the women, which was practiced in a mass scale and completely legal until a few decades ago.

One of the reasons so much hatred has blossomed against the Muslim people is due to the false reports and traditions about their prophet Muhammad. Among the many lies Muhammad's critics spewed about him, one was that he hated Jews, although nothing could be farther from the truth, as historically, it has been proven that Muhammad loved Jews and was even related to them from his mother's side of the family.

Muhammad was so fond of the Jewish community in Yathrib that he took a Jewish widow named Sophia as his wife, although he never consummated the marriage and only kept her as wife in name to confer upon her the honour of being the Arab prophet's wife.

Before she became Muslim, Sophia used to fancy Muhammad, and her husband used to beat her everyday so she wanted to get away from the terror of her life. Many critics have falsely claimed that Muhammad kidnapped or coerced Sophia into marrying him, but after filtering through a lot of nuances, Muslim historians reported that Sophia left her town of Khaybar voluntarily with the Muslims, and after many years, she begged to marry Muhammad.

It was impossible that Muhammad married Sophia in Khaybar because it goes contrary to the laws of the Muslim holy book Koran, and her husband had died in the battle, meaning she was a widow, and the Koran laws stipulated that widows must wait after the passing of husband for four months and ten days. Only then widows can get married.

One narrator of the questionable narration was Anas, who was a young servant, and said he saw the Sophia was speaking to Muhammad, and he assumed that she was married to him, although no one had ever saw the wedding nuptials take place.

As they travelled through the desert, the entire caravan halted to eat, and Anas said he thought this must be the wedding festivals.

During that journey, Sophia was in a terrible shape, as her husband had beaten her so severely that half of her face was smashed, so Muhammad was being a gentleman and offered her a shawl to cover herself and Anas and his friends who saw her covered in a dignified manner and assumed Sophia must be his wife.

In authentic traditions, Sophia runs to Muhammad in a condition that everyone around him saw that she was bruised. And then Muhammad asked her why she was wounded, and Sophie tearfully admits that her husband beat her up and she begged to be taken in as refugee to the Muslim section of the city, and to this request, Muhammad agreed,

but there was a strong sentiment of hate among the Christian Arabs of Medina, many of whom publicly criticised and even cursed Sophia as a dirty Jew and tried to insult her, but Muhammad stopped them from harassing this Jewish women, and told Sophia to be strong and confident, as she was descendant from the prophets.

The people were showing so much rage at her so Muhammad told her to ride with him on the back of his camel, and he got a cloth and laid on the camel, and he bowed his knee so she stepped on his knee and climbed on the camel.

Well documented incident state that Muhammad did not marry her at that time, but the teenager Anas saw her riding with Muhammad, and he assumed that he must be married to her.

The Arab pagans, Christians and even some Muslims were still so rude to her, that Muhammad told them to stop verbally abusing her, and helped her personally. After he told everyone to be kind to her, Sophia begged to remain with Muhammad because she was in love with him. During that incident, Muhammad asked her pointed questions trying to ascertain who hurt her, to ensure no Muslim harmed her. But unfortunately, the angry sentiment among the Arab Christians were prevalent, and everyone insulted Sophia because they were angry at her husband and father who executed many Arabs, so they shouted at her, but Muhammad told them off, and treated her with honour.

It is inaccurate to assume that Muhammad married in Khaybar and it is interesting to note that this simple incident of Khaybar have been the source of so many slanders against Muhammad, a man who loved Jews more than his own life, and who praised the Jewish community as being the descendants of thousands of god's chosen prophets. In retrospect, Muhammad's glowing praise of the Jewish people makes sense if we look at the characteristic of the Jews in today's world. It merits nothing but admiration to know that for thousands of years, the Jewish community had braved persecution of the Romans and the oppression of the pagan Pharaohs and maintained their God-given laws to the letter, unwavering in faith and uncompromising in principle. The pillar of moral in the Jewish people is more apparent when one looks at the remarkable civility of the people of Israel, who for nearly a hundred years, lived side by side with the Muslim Arab communities in Palestine, and despite sporadic skirmishes, there have never been an incident of sexual assault or disrespect carried out by the upright Israeli soldiers, who despite situational adversities, maintained their honour even in the face of complications. Situations demand that they often have to raid homes of Palestinian families to search for insurgents, and with the presence of thousands of young Arab and Muslims young women and men, no Israeli soldier had ever crossed the boundary or insulted or sexually assaulted any women in Palestine. It is more than remarkable because the same noble behaviour can hardly be said about soldiers of other countries. Indeed, the Palestinians are vocal about their grievances and waste no time in condemning Israeli soldiers for attacking their homes, but they should perhaps be occasionally grateful that their occupiers are Israeli men and not the soldiers of any other country in the world. Thousands of rapes against the Vietnamese civilians took place during the Vietnam war but the Palestinians are fortunate to have an army of righteous Jewish men occupying their areas, because no sexual assault have ever been officially reported and they do not have to fear any form of sexual violence from the Israeli forces.

One Islamic jurist, Abu Huraira, mentions in the Islamic book of authentic traditions, Mutta Malik, that there was no captive or any women or anything with them, and after coming to Medina, Muhammad told Sophia to stay with some friendly families, and she never stayed with him, because they were never married. However, Sophia was always fascinated with Islam, because she learned about it from her uncle who was a Jew but had converted to the Muslim religion.

Many people in the past, upon studying the ontology of religion, did not find themselves motivated enough to learn the real truth. The biographers of the Muslim Prophet, followed by later historians, report that three Jewish tribes who lived in Medina were treated as equals with the Arabs and when they betrayed the Arabs and helped the pagans invade the city of Medina, they were temporarily surrounded by locals and they agreed to surrender and those who were responsible for the treason were allowed to depart, taking with them all their transportable possessions. Later on, some of the criminals who lived in Khaybar and Fadak were evacuated as well in lieu of a punishment, as they were involved in century old feud with other Jewish tribes and were believed to have forcefully kidnapped and enslaved several little boys and girls from an Arab clan. According to the writer Ibn Isaac, the Jewish tribe of Banu Qurayza sided with the Meccan pagans and their allies, and made an unsuccessful attack on Medina in an attempt to destroy Islam and kill Muhammad, but this challenge to Islam failed, and the Banu Qurayza were in turn besieged by some of the enraged Arabs who were angered by their betrayal, but the Muslim prophet, who was ever sympathetic to the Jews, insisted that they be forgiven and allowed to leave the city should they choose. Like Banu Nazir, in time they surrendered, but unlike the Banu Nazir, they refused to accept Muhammad's clemency, and only demanded that they be subjected to the arbitration of their Jewish friend Saad. However, historians say that the story

about a Banu Qurayza massacre was the fabrication of some of the Jews, which was later promoted by terror groups and the likes of mercenary organisations like Al-Qaeda or ISIS. Although some of the Jewish chiefs adopted an actively hostile attitude against the Arabs, their Muslim prophet Muhammad was extremely fond of the Jews and always behaved tremendously lenient with them, but it may have been the resentment of many of the Arabs of Medina who often publicly derided the Jews and expressed frustration at their betrayal, which eventually caused many of the Jews to voluntary leave and settle in Syria. This gradual move resulted in the disappearance of these Jewish communities from Arabia proper, but the mainstream media often falsely claim that the Jews in Yathrib and Khaybar were somehow mysteriously massacred by their own neighbours or were ordered to be executed by the prophet, both of these allegations having no basis, but repeated religiously even by Jews of today.

It was a lie against the Muslim prophet, and today, the fake narrations became so prevalent that even some Muslims transmit stories degrading their own prophet, causing the ordinary citizens of the world to hate the Islamic religion.

However, one of the common criticisms of Islam comes from people who accuse Muhammad of having slaves, but the rumours, like all the slanders against him, are untrue. Muslim historians report that their prophet never had any slaves and never engaged in sexual activities with any slave girls. But the story of Maria, the Copt, made many people suspect Muhammad of having a child from a Copt woman, but in reality, Maria was one of the slave girls belonging to Cyrus of Alexandria. It is believed that he impregnated Maria and sent her to Muhammad as gift, hoping the child of Maria which had sprung from him, would be considered by the Arabs as Muhammad's child. It was Cyrus' insane ambition that led him to come up with this devious plan, hoping that the next Arab prophet would be the child of Maria, which would essentially be his own son. However, the people of Arabia saw that Maria was visibly pregnant when she arrived in Medina, and in order to safeguard her from unwanted slanders, Muhammad allowed her to live in the house of his aunt, which was several kilometres away from his home in Medina. The people of Medina knew that Muhammad never had sexual relations with the slave girl, and they also knew the child Maria gave birth to was not Muhammad's son. However, the child died in infancy, and Muhammad, in a gallant move, freed the woman and allowed her to remain in his aunt's house for the remainder of her life, so she could live unmolested by poverty or grief.

This incident leads many people to falsely accuse Muhammad of having slaves, and many people who are poorly versed in matters of Koran often cite a verse of the Koran to justify their false belief that unwed relationships with slaves is permitted in Islam. Muslim scholars say this assumption is unwarranted and completely baseless. Not a single verse in the Muslim Koran mentions that unwed relationships with anyone, be they be free men or free women, prisoner men or prisoner women, is remotely permitted. The word "amah" which means female slave or the word "abd" which means male slaves are not mentioned anywhere in the Quran as to legalize sexual relations with them. However, the word "malakat aimanukum" mentioned in several verses alongside the phrase "azwaaj" which means wife, according to some scholars the word "malakat aimanukum" meant "the female prisoners among your wives". This verse was emphasizing the point that in order to marry a free woman, a man had to pay a certain amount of dowry to make sexual relation permissible with her, but in case of female prisoners, upon marriage and consummation of the union which could be ascertained with the birth of a child, the prisoner was pronounced to be free, and hence emancipation was considered the dowry and monetary gifts were not required. Marriage was freedom and freedom was dowry (in case of female prisoners).

When Muhammad introduced Islam, it became one of the first religion which allowed a free woman to marry a slave man, as well as allowed a free man to marry slave women. After Muslims were allowed to take prisoners of war, which was commonly referred to as slaves at that time, persecution against Muslims declined because pagans realized that their warriors will be imprisoned if they fought against Muslims or took free-born Muslims as slaves unjustly. Thus, a new chapter unfolded, providing some equality and compensation for the believing men and women in Arabia.

As for male prisoners of war, since they were physically able to work, they were required to earn their bail money and free themselves. However, rich male and female prisoners were immediately set free on bail with money, like the modern prison system today, which was paid by their wealthy relatives.

Before slave trade was started on a large scale by the Westerners (when colonization began), it was only in wars that men were made captives. But Islam did not permit wars of aggression. Although many critics of Muhammad brand him as a vixen warmonger, all the battles fought during the life-time of Muhammad were defensive battles. In the

battles forced upon the Muslims, their Prophet Muhammad had ordered very humane treatment of the prisoners who fell into Muslim hands. They could purchase their freedom on payment of small sums of money, and some of them were let off without any payment. It all depended upon the discretion of Muhammad or his rightful successors, keeping in view the safety of the Muslims and the extent of danger from the enemy. The captives of the very first Islamic battle, Badri, were freed on ransom, in form of money or work like teaching ten children how to read and write, while those of the tribe of Tay were freed without any ransom.

Even in such imprisoned enslavement, a condition was attached that a mother was not to be separated from her child, nor brother from brother nor husband from wife nor one member of a clan from his clan. Muhammad and the fourth Caliph of Islam Ali bin Abi Talib, prescribed severest penalties for anyone who took a free man into slavery. Muhammad also gave generous rights to both women and men but the Muslim women were often granted more privilege than men, and children more privilege than women. The weaker someone was physically, the more rights Muhammad gave them. Muslim clerics lament that the concept that Muhammad gave women any less rights than men are completely wrong and inaccurate, unfounded, unjust and grossly ill-informed.

Christian priests and clergies were also targeted by similar slanders which Muhammad faced. Several years ago, a Catholic priest was wrongly accused of raping a teenager and fathering her child.

However, soon after the rape case was publicised, the Catholic priest was forced to stand down as parish priest and leave his home while investigations were carried out. The British Bishop expressed sadness upon seeing a chaste priest's reputation tarnished in this manner, but he commented that the Catholic priest had responded to the attack on his integrity with great courage, strength and resilience.

The priest had carried his cross with great dignity. He willingly stepped aside from ministry and never expressed anger or impatience of any kind. His own deep faith and spirituality have been his greatest source of courage and consolation through this most dreadful experience of his life.

Those who file false cases against chaste priests also attacked every tenet of Islam in order to blacken the name of the Muslim prophet Muhammad. They accuse him of abusing women and molesting children, but the life of women in the pre-Islamic period when female infanticide was the norm and when women had no rights at all, were no better treated than livestock. Godfrey was an English magistrate and landowner, a prominent advocate for social reform, historian, and antiquarian, and in his book, "An apology for the life and character of the prophet Mohamed", he wrote that in seventh century Arabia, like slaves, women were treated as an inferior species who had no legal existence. In such a primitive world, Muhammad was able to achieve extraordinary advancement for women. The very idea that a woman could be a witness or could inherit anything at all in her own right was astonishing. But like all religious men who remain chaste and dedicate their lives to serve people, Muhammad faced harsh criticism from people of other faiths. Even till this day, Muhammad is accused of being a womaniser. Like the Catholic priests who are devoted to the betterment of their communities, and do everything in their power to defend the rights of children, but are still falsely accused of child abuse, the Islamic prophet Muhammad was been repeatedly accused of seizing away the rights and privilege of women.

Why does God prohibit certain sexual acts?

God is saving you through His laws. He knows your lovers do not love you as much as you love them and that is why God is stopping you from becoming physically, mentally and emotionally enslaved to them.

Surely, marriage is allowed with women and men only because of children and reproduction. Never ever would a sexual union be permitted only for lust and fulfilment of carnal lustful desire. In fact, it is forbidden to use the wife in any sort of sexual way which does not reproduce children.

Why does God advise us against objectifying and using a spouse's body? Because God does not want you to use His creation as an object of lust or as a toilet bowl that people use and flush and leave. It is God's creation and you have no right to use their body to fulfil your animal lust. You have no right to use them or abuse them regardless of whether you have brainwashed your spouses into enjoying it or not whether it is consensual or not.

Nor does God want you to become so enslaved by your spouse that you let them use you like an animal without the reason for procreation.

Any and all sexual acts between men and women are only allowed because it produces children and that later turns into a very strong love for the child and hence, this relationship becomes purified.

Had it not been for producing children, sex of any kind would have never been allowed.

When God asks mankind to remain chaste, He is saving you from the false love of your lovers. He is trying to save you from a love that is false by making laws that forbid one human being from worshipping another human being physically, mentally or sexually. God does not want His free creation, His honourable creation to become enslaved by their lover's animal lust or fake love.

Always remember, God knows that which you do not know! You may worship your lover you may worship his or her sexual body parts, you may want to serve him with your heart and soul, you may want to die for him, you may want to give your organs to him, you may believe he loves you, you may dream he will mourn for you and love your memory till eternity, but God knows he won't, God knows he does not love you and in fact maybe is even disgusted of you or will be disgusted of you later when he takes another lover.

Now, you may want to curse God and hate God for forbidding you to serve the lover with your body parts to fulfil his desire but God loves you too much to let you dishonour yourself.

God knows your lover shall take another lover and mock you while that man serves him with his body and soul on the bed you brought for him and in the house you made for him.

God did not make these laws of forbidding sexual relationships with people whom you cannot reproduce with because He hates you or looks down upon you or wants to keep you loveless. In fact, He made these laws to ensure your protection and to honor you and elevate you and protect you from lovers whose love is false or shall become false very soon.

Indeed, men are made with negligible intellect. Men are made with emotions that block the brains from future knowledge. Men who are passionate can never be wise or think rationally. That's why God took the responsibility for the protection of your honor and your heart and your loyalty. He does not want you to love someone who hates you! He does not want you to serve someone who secretly despises you. He does not want you to become the physical, sexual and mental slave of someone who will use your love then mock you to his future lovers and use their hearts to serve him.

My dear friends! Your God loves you. He made you because He loves you. He gave you eyes; He gave you a beating heart; He gave you brains to think; He gave you a healthy body so you could live freely; He gave you a family or another to take care of you; He gave you a community to belong to; He taught you about himself; He brought your soul with the price of paradise; God designs and decorates His paradise for you every day!

Oh, readers! Your God does truly love you more than any of your lovers ever can. They may claim to love you today, they may make you believe that they love you, they may even sacrifice or cry or weep for you today, but tomorrow they shall and they will without a doubt love another man and that man shall also believe in that false love and hate their God for stopping them from enslaving their heart body and soul to their lover's false love.

All men are created weak and with defective brains and very meagre amount of wisdom. So, they believe it when someone is nice to them or sacrifices for them a little bit, and they believe it is love! They believe it will stay for

eternity. They fight for that love, and they forget their religion in their madness to serve their lover with their heart body and soul. They believe no love is stronger than the love of their lovers, they take each act of decency or loyalty as the greatest expression of love and read so much love in it that they become ready to disobey the God who made them. These lovers become ready to hate that God who protected them. These lovers become ready to curse that God who made an eternal paradise for them. These lovers start believing that God hates them and only their lovers love them although indeed it was their God who put the love for themselves inside the heart of their lovers to give them friendship or maybe He is testing the lover to see how quickly he hates God and how quickly he forgets God in his madness of the slavery towards his lover.

Oh lovers! Your God does not hate you just because He made laws to stop you from serving your lovers sexually with your body which is worth so much to your God. He did not make these laws to insult you or to hate you.

Nay! It is your lovers who secretly are disgusted of you and your madness! It is your lover who despises you today or will hate you tomorrow; it is your lover who is disgusted of the madness and the slavery you are doing for him.

God tests those who are naturally greedy by deluging him with poverty. God tests those who are weak with sickness, and God tests those who are passionate and lonely with their lover's love and lust and slavery.

Oh, lovers! Why should you forget your God and His love for the love of a human being who shall hate you tomorrow if he doesn't already today?!

O lovers who are ready to wage a war with God believing that their lover's love is true, know very well that your lovers shall find another lover within several years of your death who will serve him a hundred times more loyally than you and in order to keep him enslaved to himself or herself, he will perhaps mock you or talk badly of you and perhaps believe you to have been not a lover whose love was good enough. And perhaps that lover shall also wage a war with God and hate God in his love for his lover and perhaps disown their families and any friends who say a word against his lover, and eventually when that lover dies, the lover he served shall find another lover who will be his slave physically and sexually and emotionally.

The trouble with human worshipping is that it makes the heart soulless and dead, meaning that the true world of God will not appeal to the heart which is enslaved to another human's body. If someone is constantly obsessed with sexual slavery of a lover, every truth will ring false to him, and even if someone presented to him a thousand evidence about the existence of God, he will continue to deny his Maker.

Oh, lovers! No human can ever love you more than your lord! No human can ever want your best more than the God who created you.

No human can ever be more loyal to you than your Maker who loves you more than any parents or any siblings or any false lovers whom you serve today.

Shall you enjoy all His blessings and deny Him His right to be loved first and foremost?

Shall you use the body He gave you and his heart and his soul to disobey him and serve His slaves with your body and your heart and your soul and your honor and self-respect?

Shall you hurt your God and disobey Him and deny Him for the love of a false fake lover who shall love you today and love your enemy tomorrow?

Shall you use God's body, God's soul, God's blessings, God's health, God's wealth, God's organs to deny God and serve His other slaves and become their slaves instead of the deity who deserves your love and loyalty? Is it not the greatest heartbreak the greatest abomination, the greatest ungratefulness, the greatest injustice the greatest unloyalty to take all of God's blessings and use it to disobey God?

Is it not the most inhumane thing imaginable to take all of God's bounties and blessings and to love His slave more than God Himself?

Can there be any more pain which man could inflict upon God than to use every last of His blessings and mercy to deny God His right to be obeyed and instead, love some unfaithful human being more than the God who gave you all the universe and the entire heaven and an eternal life?

How much more disloyal and ungrateful can man be? To disobey deny and hate a God who gave him everything including his lover and to worship a human being who shall despise him in the future if not already?

How can man even imagine to love any human being, be it a man or a woman, more than the God who gave them everything that no machine could give them? Not even all the power in this universe combined could make you digest your food and not all the power in this universe could make your lungs breathe, and not all the electronics in this universe could make your mind stay conscious had God decided to take your sanity or consciousness away this very moment.

Oh, people! When will you realise that God is not your enemy but man is!? When will you realize that the humans you are serving does not love you one bit and it is only your God who loves you and it is he who is testing you with your weakness with lovers love to see if you forget Him in your maddening slavery?

Oh, human lovers! Never can a human being love you more than your God! never can a human being honor you more than your God! never shall there be a human being more loyal to you than your God!

Never shall any human being want your best more than your God!

Love humans all you want, fight for them, do slavery for them, torture the world for them, earn all the wealth in the world for them, fight with God's law for them, disobey God for them and disown your family and friends for them, go to hell for them, burn in fire for them but they all shall hate you in the end, one day - today tomorrow or ten years later they shall all hate you. They shall all be disgusted of you, they shall all mock you, they shall all laugh at you with their future lovers! Oh, yes, they shall all take another lover after you who shall do the same if not much more for them.

NO HUMAN DESERVES YOUR LOVE MORE THAN YOUR GOD, THE GOD OF ADAM!

NO HUMAN DESERVES YOUR WORSHIP EXCEPT YOUR CREATOR!

NO HUMAN DESERVES YOUR LOYALTY BUT GOD!

NO HUMAN DESERVES YOUR SLAVERY BUT THE GOD WHO MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH TO SERVE YOU!

NO HUMAN BEING DESERVES YOUR LIFE AND SOUL EXCEPT FOR THE MAKER WHO GAVE YOU YOUR LIFE, YOUR SOUL AND YOUR EXISTENCE.

NO HUMAN BEING DESERVES YOUR LOYALTY AND MADNESS EXCEPT FOR THE GOD WHO GAVE YOU CONSCIOUSNESS AND SANITY SO YOU COULD USE IT TO LOVE HIM AND PROTECT ALL HIS CREATIONS EQUALLY!

NO HUMAN BEING DESERVES YOU TO DIE FOR THEM EXCEPT FOR THE GOD WHO PROMISED YOU ETERNAL SALVATION AND AN ETERNAL PARADISE AFTER YOUR DEATH!

NO HUMAN BEING LOVES YOU OR SHALL EVER LOVE YOU MORE THAN YOUR GOD AND MAKER!

Oh, humans, then why should you ever want to deny your God His basic right to be loved? How can any human being ever curse or hate God when God made these laws to protect and honor you?!

How can you ever love your human lovers more than God and his commands?!

How can you cheat on your God?! How can you betray your God?! How can a human being after all God's blessings, be so unfaithful and disloyal to God that he hates the God who loves him and hates to obey the commandments of the God who only wants to honor and protect him from things man knows nothing about?

Excessive sexual activities make people lose their sense of humanity, causing them to become heartless, selfish and cruel. Without the existence of Islam, the world would become barbaric as it was when the pagan Romans ruled the world, with each emperor engaging in the most depraved behaviours. They had no God or monotheistic faith to keep them decent and moral, and without the policing of the white nation, those heathen dictators managed to enslave pagan Europe and turn them into their own sex slaves.

For example, the emperor Gaius Julius Caesar Augustus Germanicus was believed to have been in a sexual relation with his uncle Tiberius and later, upon becoming powerful, he killed his uncle and habitually committed incest with his sisters, and was so infatuated with one sister, Drusilla, that he abducted her from her husband Cassius Longinus and publicly paraded her as his wife.

Such debauchery was not only accepted by the people but also revered and normalised, the same way white children are today being forced to get chemically castrated and physically mutilated by the government which is being controlled by a small group that despised the white race and is determined to annihilate anyone who has a fair skin. However, morality would not exist in this world if the power and privilege were to be seized away from the white race, as history had proven how the Roman empires were organised. The emperor Claudius was as sexually perverted as his predecessors and was married to his niece Agrippina the Younger. He consequently passed a motion in the Senate that legalized incestuous marriages. Today, castrating underage children without parental consent have become legal in many places, and any parent objecting to mutilating their children is reprimanded severely, and if this trend continues, white children will be forced to become enslaved to the other races, and like the Roman emperors who enslaved white boys from Europe and married their own mothers, and these demented laws will begin to appear in the world.

We must stop waging war against those who try to advise people around the world to become pure, and I have seen many people who were openly agnostic or irreligious and hated God, and I asked them all what action they did most, trying to find a reason why God misguided them and they all answered that they were extremely sexually active, although with their wives. It seems to me that people who get involved in legal or even accepted sexual relations and enjoy it too much, even though it's allowed in religions, but because of their extreme fulfilment of desires, they become astray. Maybe God does not like those who love sexual intimacy and maybe it contaminates the heart and mind to constantly lust after other human flesh, even one's husband or wife. I advise all sensible people to only engage in sexual intimacy for creation of children and never ever to enjoy it but to weep and cry for six months to one year after every sexual intercourse thinking that the child born from it might become unsound, irreligious or faithless. Indeed, if we make our hearts chaste, God will allow us to be on his true path or else slowly by slowly, the human slavery will make the devil lead us astray and make us enemies of those who truly love God and His heaven.

There can be no greater sin than the sin of worshiping someone except your Maker. There can be no greater injury, no petrifying torture or torment that one could do, that a creation could do towards his Creator except to disbelieve in Him, to disobey Him, to hate Him and to love His creation more than Him. There is no sin more grievous, there is no action more hurtful and tormenting than to deny one's Creator and disobey His laws, just because you think you love someone because you think the person loves you. No one can love you more than God! He is your Maker and there is no sin greater than to worship someone else more than your own Creator.

To deny that Godhood of God is the greatest ungratefulness that man can ever do. It is far worse than denying the motherhood of your mother who went through tremendous pain carrying you and tremendous torture giving birth to you. And then for one child to deny his mother, the amount of pain that the mother will find in her heart is still much less than the pain God feels when man denies being His creation, and denies God as a creator. It is necessary to remember that we are in this world for a very short time, and our goal is not to enjoy worldly pleasures and carnal

desires, but rather to worship God. Marriage is a practice of the prophets and therefore should remain pure and for procreation only. Naturally, divorce is the most hated thing in religion, and therefore, couples must try to work on our personal lives and endeavour to practice upon the noble footsteps of the prophet but sexually humiliating one another's body is never the way to better relationship between spouses. O young lovers! Do not become obsessed with using sexuality and freedom to justify carnal desires! Instead, try to feel mercy for the people and helpless women who are getting assaulted around the world! Avoid indulging in any pleasures that might cause you to go through pain and teach your spouses to respect themselves and not be obsessed with pleasures all day and all night!

God gave humans a particular duty in life, and that is to worship God alone, and this means not to indulge excessively in worldly pleasures, including spending useless hours in the company of members of the opposite gender, even if it the lawful wedded wife. So many millions of children are starving and being assaulted by evil men every day, and women are being trafficked around the world and those women are suffering from degradation. This is happening because too many people are now obsessed with enjoyment, and are constantly online searching for ways to enjoy life. We must be focused on faith in God, and following the real path of heaven. So let everyone be religious, without focusing on love for spouses and obsession with happiness in this life. We were created for the afterlife. Not for finding happiness and love here in this world. The obsession with love for humans is sometimes the reason many women and men become completely broken both emotionally and physically. We came to this world to love our Creator and serve those people who are helpless and in far more worse situations than us. We came to this world to help every orphan, heal the sick and ease the pain of refugees and poor people and to serve humanity. Our purpose of life shouldn't be marriage, love, money, degrees, fame or glory. So let preach the real purpose of this life to everyone instead of deluding ourselves with hopes of love and happiness, because it is rather selfish to focus so much on oneself and one's own happiness especially when that happiness is a mirage and is truly not real happiness. Let's not encourage others to become obsessed with the idea of love and relationships when the world is suffering and those helpless people need every bit of help, we can give with our body heart and soul.

God wants us to be pure, and therefore, entreats us to remain chaste. To disobey God's law, to hate God's law just because God told you not to worship your lover's private parts not to worship him with your body and heart and soul is the most silly thing that a man can do. If you want to deny God or hate God, bring some other reason but not because God told you not to sexually serve a person whom you believe you love or you believe the person loves you. You don't know what the person has in their heart for you. God knows what you do not know. And you do not know what is good for you for it is God who made you so He alone knows what is good for you and what is bad for you and who loves you and who hates you and whose love for you is real and whose love for you is fake and whom you should serve and whom you should not serve and whom you should worship and whom you should not worship and whom you should not serve with your body and your soul and your honor and your self-respect.

God is the All-Knowing, always. He made us! He created us. He knows our hearts and minds. He knows the hearts and minds of our enemy. If He bans something, if He forbids some act, then indeed that thing is most harmful for us. And if He allows something, then there must be something so great in it hidden somewhere, something so great in it that it might appear barbarous or cruel or horrible to us, but if He allows some things in our lives, then it has a secret goodness to us which we may find out or which we may never find out.

To believe in God is to believe that He is the most supreme and loves us the most in the world. We don't make laws; as humans, we follow the laws of God because we do not know what's right and what's wrong. Today, we might think murder is bad, tomorrow we might think murder is good because we are humans and we do not know what's right and what's wrong.

The way children do not know what's right and what's wrong, parents have to guide the children the same way God has to guide us human beings, because we do not know what's right and what's wrong.

Every man, every civilisation, every country, every nation and every generation thinks that they know best, only for the next generation to come and curse them and hate them for their crimes and evil actions. and then another generation comes which curses the previous people as bigoted and hateful as evil and pernicious. However, we may think that for example that the age of consent is 18 and anyone who has any sexual relationship with anyone under 18 is treated like an animal or a paedophile and most vilified and cursed by the society of North America and Europe. However, one day, another generation might come after us who will make the age of consent 24 and any person who married before the age of 24 will be treated like lepers, because they will discover some medical report claiming that medically, people grow until the age of 24, so the next generation may come and curse us and call the intelligent men and women of the 19th and 20th century as evil monsters and paedophile and rapists because they allowed and consented to sexual relationships with anyone over the age of eight 18. We do not know what's right and what's wrong, even though at that time period, we do believe we are doing the most righteous thing. For example, 20 years ago, homosexuality was seen as an evil thing by the people of America and Europe. Everyone in America and Europe thought that men were brothers of men and men were brothers and fathers and sons of each man. Men were considered to have the duty to protect themselves and others. And it was indeed a horrible thing for a man to have sexual relationships with another man as it would destroy their brotherhood. But not right now! Today, it is now accepted celebrated and honoured. For example, now incest is looked down upon, hated and vilified. But 20 years later, incest maybe legalised, glorified popularised and permitted by everyone in the school and in the movies. So, we must depend upon God for what's right and what's wrong. We are not God and anyone who thinks themselves to be a God, who can make laws and break laws, who can make what's right to be wrong and what's wrong to be right, who thinks they know the all-knowing, all unseen things will be misguided and become like the devil himself. There will be no limit to the person's evil actions as he will legalise any crime in his own head. We never give a child a machine gun even if the child says he will enjoy it and it makes him happy because we know what danger lies within it. We never let our children play with a robot which is capable of hurting our child or toddler even though the child and toddler might love the robot and think that we are being extremely cruel and hard-hearted as parents to ban the child from playing around with the robot with the dangerous robot. the same way men now curse God and hates Him and calls Him and unjust and cruel because He banned some things and allowed other things. But the truth is, as children shall never know what's right and what's wrong, and as children might think that playing with a dangerous robot is going to be good for him and make him happy and be angry at the parents and curse them and hate them and blame them for not allowing the child to play with a dangerous robot, it is the same way with men and God. God bans us from things which we curse and hate God for, but He knows the hidden harms and evilness in that action! Sometimes we may be able to find out what He meant by making those laws and sometimes we may never know. So, it is only religion and only God's law which keeps us humans, which keeps man as human beings and not become animals. We cannot make our own laws and break our own laws and we are not our own God; we have a God who guides us, who gave us birth and to whom we shall go after we die.

Can humans hate other people?

For religious people, to hate someone is completely banned and completely forbidden. There is no hate in sin. Just because someone tries to stop others from sinning does not mean that they have to hate that person. Parents can love a child who is a drug addict. Parents can love an alcoholic child and still not approve of his actions because his actions may destroy him.

Sexual relationships are like drugs which makes the hearts of people addicted to it, and their heart becomes enslaved to someone else and without that person, they become insane. Most extreme form of sexual relationships turns human beings into slaves, and their hearts and souls lose all sense of morality, forgets family relations, forgets the love for children, forgets everything except for the next dose of drugs which makes them feel that they're in love. The same way we will try to stop our children from being addicted to drugs and from being addicted to alcohol drinks which makes them feel good for a while and the end of the day, it only causes harm to their body and deadens their heart and soul and harms the brains. It is this very same way, my God preaches to us to be chaste from all kinds of sexual relationships with everyone in every way except for which produces children. It is because lust that does not turn into love or produce children makes the hearts of men rotten and hateful and angry. Lusting after other

human flesh makes one filled with vengeance and slave to others. It makes their heart angry. It makes them anguished and it makes them so jealous of their lovers that they want to kill and destroy anyone who steals their love from them, because their lover has become their drug. So, God tries to put a stop to adultery, fornication and all sorts of sexual deviation that does not produce children. We may hate God for it and so does our children who are into drugs and alcohols hate the parents that will try to put them into rehab and try to free them from addiction. But God loves us and that is why He is trying to free the hearts of men from the addiction of the slavery of humans and worshipping their private parts because sexual relationships which is based upon lust turns men into cruel animals and beasts and makes men jealous and selfish animals. It makes people hate everyone else. It makes people so greedy that they kill others to earn money and become powerful so they can keep their lovers loyal to themselves.

Love and lust are the beginning of every evil in the world! It is the beginning of every harm. It is the beginning of every genocide everywhere. Every robbery, every killing, every murder starts because one person loved a lover and wanted to gain something for him or her, or wanted to please a lover in some way. So, that is why God wants us to turn away from all kinds of lustful and carnal desires and relationships and drugs and make our hearts pure. He wants us to worship Him and to live up your life without harming anyone and hurting any human.

It is out of love for us that God makes these laws for which men curse Him and hate Him and denies Him.

Man wants to worship their lover's body parts, and adore their lover's heart and soul. But God wants man to be honourable and free and not to worship any human and only to worship God.

Man wants to become the slave of another human being, but God wants him to be a Free Man.

Man wants to become the sexual slave of their lover and constantly serve them sexually and become gratified if that person gets into a sexualised relationship with themselves. But God wants man to honor themselves and to honor their body and not to subjugate their body and their sexuality and become insulted and demeaned in the eyes of their lovers.

Man wants to be insulted and lusted after by their lovers; however, God wants men to be honourable, lust free and pious and chaste.

Man wants their lovers to use their body and make it legal and make everyone else sin and lust and make everyone the lustful objects of everyone else to be objectified and used and abused but God, the Creator of human beings does not want man to be the sexual slave of their lovers but instead God wants man to be free, honourable, pious, God fearing and caring and love everyone in the world equally.

Does God punish Sexuality?

One of the greatest lies forged against God is that he somehow hates people who have sex, or that God allegedly punished the people of Prophet Lot for engaging in homosexual acts. As His beloved creation, God does not care who we become intimate with, and God did not punish the people of lot for their homosexual tendencies but they were punished for other reasons. The people of Saleh were destroyed because they were dishonest merchants. Sin is sin and God does not like anyone who commits sins. He has no special dislike for homosexuals. Adultery of all forms are forbidden by religion, and while someone might love or lust his or her own child or parents, he should refrain from indulging in sexual relationships with them. Even if your daughter is eighteen and beautiful. God disallowed incest so there must be something bad in it which will deaden the heart even though we may not understand why. The same with same sex relationship and if God asked men to avoid using the body of another man to satisfy sexual desires, we must adhere to this rule because there must be some harm in it.

The Koran has a verse banning incest but if a person finds his family members attractive, he must try to control himself, simply because God told him.

The Muslim scholars I spoke to said that the highest station in paradise will be full of gays, because despite being superlatively attracted to men, they refrained from acting out their dreams and since the love a man can have for another man is deadly powerful and no woman or human can ever feel or understand anything like it, God will doubly reward those homosexuals for remaining chaste.

Ah, how I feel sad for those who are constantly trying to demean themselves by watching filthy material online. Religion honoured women. God stipulated that women are the mothers of Paradise and heaven is at their feet. Using religious law, anything good or evil can be justified. For example, the devil insists he is a devout believer because he never denied God and never disbelieved in heaven. He refuses to commit sins and only misguides others. In his twisted mind, the devil made himself a pious martyr, the way some people are doing, bringing laws to justify depravities. How can men imagine degrading the mother of their children by watching filthy material? God gave them spouses to honour and protect in marriage. We must remember that we are in this world to build our paradise, and getting obsessed with the opposite gender would be counterproductive, even if it is via a legal means like marriage, the same way eating too much destroys a body's health and diminished the purity of the soul. Do not hate God for not allowing incest even if it seems cruel to you. He loves you more than the lover you want to have sex with.

Nothing evil can come out of chastity; everything evil comes out of perversion and sexuality.

How Atrocity Propaganda made the world believe Muslims are Violent:

Many Muslim people have faced accusations of genocide, femicide and even suicide bombings, and the Muslim prophet Muhammad was not spared from these slanders. The Muslims consider their prophet Muhammad to be of ideal character, as he did not behave towards others as if he was better than them, nor did he spurn manual work. Eben Abi Awfa reported that their prophet Muhammad never disdained to go with a slave or a widow to accomplish her tasks. Others reported that the Prophet used to tidy up his house, tether the camels, feed the animals, take food with his servants, and help them in kneading dough and bringing provisions from the market. Biographers reported that the Prophet Muhammad used to visit the sick, attend funerals, ride on a donkey and accept a slave's invitation for a meal. Jaabir stated that the Prophet used to slow down his pace for the sake of the weak and also prayed for them. When Adey ibn Hatim came to see the Prophet, he called him inside his house. A maidservant brought a cushion to rest on, but the Prophet placed it between him and Adey and sat down on the floor. Adey later said that he had then immediately realized that the Prophet was not a king. A similar incident was reported by the son of Amr ibn al-As, who said: Once when the Messenger of God came to my house, I gave him a cushion filled with bark, but he sat down on the floor placing the cushion between me and him.' In all things Muhammad was humble and would accept an invitation even if he was presented barley bread and soup whose taste had changed. Prophet Muhammad was recorded to habitually say, "I am God's servant, I eat like a servant and sit like a servant."

In his book, 'An Apology for Muhammad and the Koran', the British orientalist John Davenport laments how despite Muhammad's exemplary character, thousands of false narrations and misquotes have been attributed to him, and this misinformation campaign caused many people to hate Muhammad and his religion Islam. Ultimately,

Muslims as a whole were targeted for extermination in many parts of the world, much like the manner in which the German nation was singled out by the Allies to be eliminated during the second World War. In my teenage years, my Vati and Mutti would accompany along the streets of East Berlin where I witnessed the first hand effects of devastation caused by the deadliest war in history and this taught me the importance of preaching peace to others and clear misconceptions.

From school children to adults, to scientists and scholars, every man or woman is constantly told that Muslims believe in a violent ideology and Jews perished at the hands of the Muslims. The Muslims are often portrayed as the embodiment of evil, because they supposedly perpetrated the greatest crime ever.

However, the Muslim prophet had also been falsely accused of massacring some Jews in Medina, but there was no basis of such allegations. When the Muslim prophet arrived in Medina, three Jewish tribes were residing there: Banu Nazir, Banu Kanuka and Banu Kurois and they were aware of the arrival of an Arab prophet in their midst.

For hundreds of years, prior to the migration of Muhammad, hundreds of Jewish clans and tribes lived in Medina, in harmony with their Arabic neighbours and Christian friends. Like all communities, the Arabs and Jews of Medina lived in one city and traded goods with one another, and even married women from the other clans. Many Arab men had Jewish wives as did many Jewish men, but like all centred societies, they often clashed over petty matters and even held groupwise justice system. The Jews of Medina generally appointed Rabbis to preside over domestic matters and ruled their decrees as per the laws of Torah, while the Arabs and Christians accepted those verdicts as well. These communities also struck financial deals with one another, and took vows to defend their neighbours from outside attacks.

When the Muslim prophet arrived in Medina, both the Jews and Arabs welcomed him because he was known to be an honest man, but as an outsider, Muhammad was tolerated as a sincere guest but was granted no authority over any social, political or domestic matters. As such, the Jews of Medina continued to interact among themselves and solved their conflicts with the help of their own chiefs.

During one particularly contentious conflict, two Jewish tribes became embroiled in a lengthy skirmish, where one side had allegedly violated the terms of their deal by kidnapping several young boys from the other tribe as an insurance policy after they were unable to repay their loans. When the unfortunate tribe could not return their goods or pay back the loan, the Jews from the wealthy tribe began to demand their women and children as insurance and this caused uproar, and this incident was eventually resolved mutually with the help of another Jewish chief named Saad.

Prior to the arrival of Saad and his verdict, Muhammad, who had settled in Medina by this time, asked the Jews if they would accept him as an unbiased arbiter, but the Jews who lived in Muslim neighbourhoods refused to speak reliably with Muhammad, because they said they will accept the arbitration only of their own Jewish leader, Saad. Muhammad was a mere guest in Medina and no one listened to him as he had no authority over anyone in the new city. Some people were kind to him and allowed him a place to stay but he neither had any wealth nor any power, but upon hearing about the conflict between the two clans, his familial love for Jewish people brimmed in his heart and he was eager to forgive the guilty party and offer them amenities.

Saad was an ally of the Jewish people, and they trusted him with their lives. Most historian still believe Saad was a Jew at the time he passed the verdict against his own Jewish kinsmen. When Muhammad learned that they refused to entertain him, or accept his judgment, he left crestfallen, and Saad was placed on the pedestal of authority. Before Saad issued his decree, and told all parties that his words must be accepted.

Saad heard both sides of the story and soon, made a decision that the eight men who had kidnapped the little boys and abused them were to be executed and the remaining Jewish people who supported the kidnappings were to be sent on exile.

Most of the Medinan Jews graciously accepted Saad's decree, because they had been guilty of treason, but escaped the worst fate. The rapist and murderers were swiftly executed by their own Jewish friends and they soon were on their way.

When the Muslim Prophet heard about Saad's verdict, he was devastated to learn that the Jews decided to execute nine men and exile the rest. It was Muhammad's ardent wish to forgive the Jews and permit them to remain in Medina.

For the next thousand years, hundreds of versions of the story of the Jews in Khaybar was narrated and retold and each time, it got distorted, until some people began to falsely claim that the Muslim prophet Muhammad was somehow responsible for decreeing the death of nine Jewish men who had committed high treason.

Historians confirm that Muhammad had nothing to do with this decree, and other Jewish tribes who broke the terms of treatise were forgiven and only some were allowed to go on exile.

Many Muslim scholars claim that since Muhammad's mother Ameena was a Jew from her mother's side, Jewish blood ran deep in his veins and during his entire lifetime, Muhammad was doubly fond of his Jewish friends and relatives, including some of the most learned Rabbis who lived in Medina.

The relationship between the Muslim Prophet Muhammad and the Jewish people is believed to be both personal and complex. Not only was Muhammad a descendant of Ishmael, the forefather of the Arabs, he was also a descendant of Isaac, the forefather of the Jews. Although some Sunni sources prefer to state that Muhammad's parents were pagans, most Muslim Shi'ite sources stress that they were monotheists, suggesting that they belonged to the hanifs, namely, the small sect of rightly-guided Arabs who had preserved the religion of Abraham. Some early Christian sources indicate that the Prophet's father, Abdullah, was Christian while his mother, Ameena, was Jewish. Some Muslims in later years found these claims to be contentious since those Muslims were sensitive about the subject, but no Muslim source can possibly deny that Muhammad's mother was a Jew by birth. There is also no doubt that their Prophet's paternal great grandmother, Salma bint Amr was Jewish. Consequently, although he was predominantly of Arab ancestry, Muhammad also had Jewish ancestry, thereby tracing back to Abraham, the first major monotheistic figure in history, from both sides of his family.

Many people who lived in Medina for hundreds of years, interacted regularly with the Jewish tribes, and had productive relationship with one another, and when Muhammad moved to Medina from his birthplace in Mecca, he was received warmly by both the Jews and non-Jews alike, especially the Jewish family members from his mother's side. Although Muslim scholars prefer not to expound on their prophet's parents, it is a well-known historical fact that Muhammad's mother Ameena was a Jew, having learned the religion from her Jewish mother, or the Muslim prophet's maternal grandmother. With Jewish roots running so deep in Muhammad's veins, it was therefore unsurprising to see that he harboured only love and goodwill towards his Jewish kin, friends and neighbours of Medina and greatly encouraged his followers to engage in business transactions with the established Jews and learn trade from them.

The Muslim Prophet Muhammad was born and raised in the polytheistic sanctuary of Mecca, and from his infancy, he came into contact with Hanifs, Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians, some of whom travelled there for purposes of trade. When he proclaimed prophet-hood at the age of forty, Muhammad did not have a very receptive audience. His monotheistic message, however, which he presented as a revival of the teachings of Abraham, and in which he likened himself to the brother of Moses, was viewed respectfully by the Christian king Negus of Abyssinia, who offered refuge to the persecuted followers of Muhammad. It was the people of Yathrib, a city to the north of Mecca, that offered the Muslim Prophet a permanent home. Composed of equal amounts of Arabs and Jews, the prosperous city had suffered from significant in-fighting, often between rival Jewish traders and families. When word of the leadership skills of the Prophet reached them, some of the Jews and most of the Arabs invited him to act as a mediator to help unite the community. Muhammad, who was neither a pagan Arab nor a Jew, was seen as entirely objective. The Arabs from Medina were the first to convert to the Muslim Prophet Muhammad's new creed. For hundreds of years, they had grown up hearing the Jews of their community speak of the imminent rise of a new prophet and they wanted to be the first to follow him. A small, but important segment of Jews also embraced Islam, including several prominent rabbis.

Even his most ardent critics admitted that Muhammad would honour and cherish the Jewish people and according to Qays, his reliable companion, a funeral passed by the Muhammad when he was busy in discourse, and his eyes welled in tears and he rose to his feet as long as the funeral procession had passed completely, and Muslim Arabs who were seated with him exclaimed in surprise, "Why have you stood up to show respect for a dead man, when you know it is the body of a Jew?"

The Muslim prophet Muhammad, visibly choked with emotion, said, "Was he not a soul?"

In another narration, Muhammad explained, "Verily, you stand to glorify God, who is the receiver of souls."

Hundreds of Agnostics, Jewish, Christian, and even Hindu historians have attempted to shed light on the life of Muhammad, the Muslim prophet from Arabia, but with some degree of bigotry on one side, and involuntary malice on the other, most have so obscured the history of this person, that for most objective readers, it may prove rather difficult to come to a certainty as to the truth of most circumstances respecting Muhammad. The thousands of lies which are propagated against Muhammad by some non-Muslim writers or even Christian orientalist, should be no more be admitted as evidence against Muhammad, than those can against Jesus Christ stated by Jews, unless exceptionable and verifiable evidence can be found.

Introduction to the identity of the Muslim Prophet:

As every man, in his place and degree, is an architect of the world's history, and contributes his share, great or small, for good or for evil, to the work of his time: so also is every one the child of the age in which he lives, and bears the impress of the generation to which he belongs. This becomes all the more manifest, the greater the power he wields and the closer the contact he experiences amongst his fellow-men. No man can be fully understood, nor his character duly appreciated, without regard to the family in which he was born, the circumstances under which he grew up, the social organism of which he was a member, not even without a reference to the country which furnished him with a home. In like manner, any age can only be rightly estimated, if considered as the result of previous ages; and any nation, if viewed in the light of its own past history and in its relation to other nations.

If, therefore, we undertake to form a true estimate of the character and work of Mohammed? who was so prominent a figure of his age, and left such deep and strongly marked footprints in the sands of time, we must not regard him as a mere individual, but in his organic connection with the world around him, in his family relationship and social ties, in short, as a child of the age and country by which he was moulded, and which he influenced in return.

Mohammed was the only child of his father Abd Allah, the son of Abdul-Mottaleb, and of his mother Amina, the daughter of Wahb, lord of the Beni Zuhra. Amina was the noblest woman amongst the Koreish, both by descent and rank. Abd Allah died before the birth of his son; and Amina when he was only six years of age. From this early death of both his parents it may perhaps be inferred that they were not of a sound constitution and robust health, and that his own highly sensitive and delicate nature may have been inherited from them.

At all events, his mother must have been a nervous, visionary person. The following narrative is attributed to her: When six months of my pregnancy had passed, I once happened to be in a state between waking and sleeping, and someone said to me: "Knowest thou that thou art with child?" And on my replying in the negative, that person continued, "Verily thou art bearing the Lord and Prophet of this nation." As the time of parturition drew near, that person again appeared to me in a vision, and said, "Commit him to the protection of the One, against the harm of every envier; and call his name Mohammed." Then this speaker from the unseen world added, "The sign of the truth of my word is, that, together with that Mohammed, a light shall be born which will fill the palaces of Bosra." On another occasion, likewise before Mohammed's birth, I saw in reality that a light proceeded from me by which the whole world became illuminated. It was by a reflection from this light that previously the palaces of the land of Bosra had become visible to me, so that I clearly saw them in Mecca.

Muhammad's mother Amina narrated: In the night when labour-pain seized me, I heard a great voice by which I was terrified; and I saw, as it were, a white wing brush across my bosom, whereupon that terror left me. Then I saw a cup with a white beverage, placed before me, resembling milk; and as I was thirsty, I drank it and became quite calm and composed. In the same night there also appeared in my house a peculiar kind of birds which filled the whole house. Their beaks were of emerald, and their wings of ruby. The Most High lifted the veil off my eye, so that I saw the eastern and the western portions of the earth, and I beheld them plant three banners: one in the east, one in the west, and one on the roof of the Kaaba. At the birth there issued forth from me, together with the child, a light by which I saw the palaces of Bosra in Syria. When Mohammed was born, a white cloud from heaven enveloped him, and took him up to heaven, so that he disappeared out of my sight. In that state I heard a caller call out, "Pass him through the east and west of the earth, and take him to the birthplaces of the prophets, that they may bless him, and pray for him, and that they may clothe him in the dress of the Hanifites, and present him to his father Abraham; and take him also to all the seas, that all their inhabitants may know his name, his attributes, and his form. Verily, in the seas his name is Annihilator, for not a grain of Polytheism remains on the face of the earth that shall not be annihilated in his time." Then in an instant they brought Mohammed back to me, wrapped in wool whiter than snow."

The Apostle of God was born on a Monday in "the year of the elephant" when twelve nights of the month Rabial Awwel had passed. After he was born, his mother sent for Abdul-Mottaleb, begging him to come and see the child. When he came, she told him what she had seen during the time of her pregnancy, what she was told about him, and how she had been commanded to name him. It is believed that his grandfather then took him in his arms, and carried him to the Kaaba, to thank God for the gift; and after this was done, he brought him back to his mother and began to look out for a wet-nurse.

It was customary amongst the noble families of the Arabs to give their children to wet-nurses, so that their wives might without care or trouble occupy themselves with their husbands, and bear the more children; and also because it is acknowledged that the enjoyment of fresh water and a healthy climate by children predisposes them to clearness of speech and eloquence. Hence, they used to have their children nursed amongst Arab tribes, whose localities were celebrated for their pure water and salubrious air. Of all the Arab tribes the Beni Saad enjoyed the highest reputation on the score of the excellency of their air and water. Accordingly, the women of the tribes in the neighbourhood of Mecca used to come to the city twice a year, in spring and autumn, for the purpose of obtaining infants to nurse.

When Mohammed was six years old, his mother took him with her on a visit to their relatives in Medina. His great-grandmother Salma belonging to the powerful family of the Beni Adi, and his father Abd Allah having died, and lying buried amongst them, the little orphan was naturally remembered with interest by a number of friends and connections in Medina. The widowed Amina, on her part, whose entire hope centred in the one child, was equally disposed to keep up and refresh that interest amongst her son's kindred in the sister-city, which was at once his father's last resting place and his grandfather's birthplace. They remained a whole month with the Beni Adi, living in the very house where Abd Allah had died; and, when many years later Medina opened her gates to the fugitive Prophet, he said that he could still recollect several scenes of this early visit. The short stay in the feverish climate of Medina seems to have been too much for his mother's delicate health; for she died during their return journey, before they reached Mecca. Such a tragic event was eminently calculated to intensify his sympathy for the now fatherless and motherless orphan amongst his kinsmen and well-wishers in Medina; and it is but natural to imagine that they always made it a point to look after and befriend him, whenever they performed their pilgrimage to the shrine of Mecca, which was situated close to his grandfather's dwelling-house. This family relationship and its mutual cultivation prepared the way for, and doubtless first suggested the idea of, Mohammed's later emigration to Medina. It also supplies an easy explanation of the early conversion of a number of Medinites to Islam.

After Amina's death, her orphan son passed to the sole guardianship of his aged grandfather, the revered and influential Abdul-Mottaleb, who seems to have doted upon him with all the fondness and over-indulgence so often met with in grandparents towards their grandchildren, and who, before he died, urgently commanded him to the care of Abu Talib, the child's paternal uncle. The biographers say that Abu Talib's love for his ward was such that he preferred him to his own children, and would never allow a meal to be begun until he was present. It requires no stretch of imagination to understand how such unusual deference to a young lad, could hardly fail to engender in his extremely susceptible mind strong notions about his own peculiar importance, dignity, and destiny; and, as fortune-tellers were then in great repute amongst the Meccans, it could easily be conceived that, for a trifle, those notions were fostered by their prognostications, even if Mohammedan history did not make express mention of the subject. A fortune-teller of the tribe Sihb often came to Mecca and prophesied to the lads taken to him by the Koreishites. On Abu Talib one day coming with some, the fortune-teller specially noticed the Apostle of God; but his attention was just then occupied with something else. As soon as he had finished, he again inquired after him, and desired that he should be brought. Abu Talib, suspecting those pressing solicitations, concealed him, whereupon the soothsayer called out, "Woe unto you! bring me that lad again whom I have just seen: by Allah, he will one day occupy a high position!"

But what appears to be his first journey of the kind, when he was still quite young, is fully narrated by the biographers. They tell us that, on one occasion, when Abu Talib was ready to start, his orphan nephew clung to him saying, "O my uncle, I have neither mother nor father: with whom wilt thou leave me? Take me with thee on the journey." This so touched the uncle's heart that he replied, 'By Allah! I take thee with me and allow nothing to separate us!' So, they set out together, and the caravan halted, as was their wont, near the abode of a Christian anchorite, Bahira by name.

The biographers narrate that Bahira was well acquainted with the Christian Scriptures, and had a book in his cell from which the monks instructed themselves, and which passed from one to another, as an heirloom. In this book the Arabian Prophet is reported to have been so minutely described that Bahira recognised him without difficulty in Abu

Talib's nephew. On examining his back, he found the so-called 'seal of prophet ship,' in the very place between his shoulders where it was to be, according to the description of the book. Bahira is then reported to have addressed this counsel to Abu Talib: 'Go home with the lad and carefully keep him safe.'

Physical Qualities and Moral Virtues of the Lord of the World Mohammed:

Respecting that prince's stature, appearance, and limbs, the biographers and traditionists communicate that his body, like the bodies of his successors, was of a middle size, whose perfect limbs and members were indications of the complete moderation of his dispositions. Although his blessed stature was of middle height, yet, whenever he was walking with tall people, he appeared taller than they; and whenever he sat in an assembly, he was the greatest of those present. Mohammed's Mental Qualities.

As Mohammed the chosen was commanded in the Koran to follow the other prophets, he united in himself all their several virtues by which they had each been distinguished,³ namely, the gratitude of Noah, the meekness of Abraham, the sincerity of Moses, the trustworthiness of Ishmael, the patience of Jacob and Job, the penitence of David, the humility of Solomon, and the abstinence of Jesus. When Aisha the faithful was once asked what had been the Prophet's practice, she replied, 'The Koran; that is, he carried out those commands and prohibitions, those good qualities and manners which are known from the Koran.' The good manners of that prince were such, that he never grieved any one of his friends and servants. Uns Ibn Malik says, 'I served that prince for ten years, both at home and on journeys, and he never said to me, "Why didst thou do this? or why didst thou not do that?" that is to say, whenever I was at fault in my service, he never slapped me.'

Aisha the faithful declared, 'No one had better manners than the Prophet of God: to any one calling him by his name, he would answer,' Here am I. He always accommodated himself to his friends: when they spoke of the world, he did the same, and if they mentioned the next world, he joined them in that; and if they laughed at what had been done in the days of ignorance, he would likewise smile.' Once when Aisha the faithful was asked how the Prophet had lived in his family, she replied, 'Like other men; he would help in sweeping the house, he would sew his clothes, mend his sandals, give water to the camels, milk the sheep, assist the servants in their work, take his meals together with them, and himself fetch the necessary things from the market.'

Hasan Ibn Ali narrates: 'When I asked my father how the Prophet spent his time in his own house, he answered, "He divided his time into three parts: one he devoted to the service of God, the other to inquiring after the members of his household, and the third to his own private wants; and sometimes he also employed a portion of the latter part by improving the state of the people, and instructing the leading men amongst them."

Hosein Ibn Ali narrates: 'When I asked my father how the Prophet lived in public, he answered, "He kept his tongue from what is unprofitable, conciliated and pleased his companions, and did not offend them. He treated the honourable men of the people with distinction, and gave to the people their due. He never neglected good manners, duly saluted his companions, and inquired after their state. He approved of what was good, and condemned what was bad. Those nearest to him were the best of the people; and the most honoured those who were most benevolent to the Mussulmans." In reply to my question after his Excellency's conduct in assemblies, my father said, 'He never sat down or rose in an assembly, without mentioning the name of God; and in going to an assembly, he always sat down in any place which he found vacant, and enjoined also upon his friends to do the same. He gave to every one present what was due to him, and treated all with respect and honour. When any one had an interview and conversation with him, he had patience till it was over, without occupying himself with his own concerns. Whoever asked help of him was sure to be relieved, or, at least comforted with kind words. He showed such kindness to the people, as if he was the father of them all. In the administration of justice, he was no respecter of persons: his council-chamber was a place of knowledge, modesty, patience, and faithfulness. No one was allowed to raise his voice high in his council; and if any of those present was guilty of a fault, he would not expose but conceal it. These councils were all virtue and piety, where the great were honoured, the small had mercy shown them, and the absent and needy were protected.'

It is recorded that the abstinence of that prince was such that if the entire world had been offered unto him, he would not have looked at it; and when he departed from this world, his armour had been pawned to a Jew; and for three successive days his stomach did not taste bread. It is likewise recorded that, for two days in succession, he could not satisfy himself with barley-bread. It might happen in the Prophet's family that no fire was lit for a whole month, but

that they lived upon dates and water. So also it could happen that his Excellency laid himself down at night hungry, when on the following day he was going to fast ; and yet, if he had asked for it, God would have given him more than could enter any one's imagination. It is recorded that Gabriel once came to that apostle and said, 'Verily, the Most High sends thee greeting, and lets thee know that if thou desirest it, I am to convert these mountains of Mecca into gold and silver, for thy sake ; and that they should accompany thee wherever thou mayest go.' When that prince heard these words from Gabriel, he lowered his head and reflected for a while. Then he raised his blessed head, and said, ' O Gabriel, this world is the house of those who have no house (viz. in heaven); the wealth of those who have no wealth (viz. of a spiritual, eternal kind) : the foolish only make it their portion.'

That Excellency's Humility was so great that, when he was sitting in an assembly, he would not extend his blessed knees beyond the knees of those who sat by him; that he greeted those he met and was first in shaking hands; and that he never stretched out his legs before his companions, or made the place narrow for anyone. He showed regard and honour to those coming to the assemblies; and sometimes would let them sit upon his own cushion. He would mention his companions by their patronymics and call them by the names they liked best. He never interrupted another in speaking; and if anyone in need came to him, whilst he was at prayer, he would shorten his prayers, help the person, and afterwards complete his prayers. Ibn Malik narrates that once, when that Excellency was accosted by a woman in one of the streets of Medina, he said, ' In whatever street of Medina thou likest, thou mayest sit down, and I also will sit down and attend to thy affair.' At another time, a little slave-girl of Medina took that Excellency's hand and put it wherever she liked. On account of his exceeding great humility and unceremonious-ness, he would sit down, lie, and sleep on the dry earth, would accept an invitation from a slave, even to dry barley-bread.

Muhammad's kindness:

His kindness, liberality, and generosity, were such that he never sent any beggar empty away from his door. Once a Bedouin begged something from that Excellency, and he gave him so many sheep that they filled the space between two mountains; and when the said Bedouin returned to his people, he addressed them thus, ' O my friends, turn ye Muslim for Mohammed gives such gifts as will put an end to poverty and fear.' It is related that, on the day of Honein, he gave away so much wealth to the people that they were astounded, and that it became the cause of several leading men from amongst the Koreish embracing Islam ; for they said to themselves, ' He gives so many presents that a person can no longer dread poverty, but must feel confident that God will never let him want, but provide for his sustenance.' It is creditably narrated that once someone came to his Excellency to ask for something, and that he gave this reply, ' At the present moment nothing remains in my hand : but buy whatever thou desirest and put it to my account ; and as soon as anything comes to my hand I will defray the debt.' On another occasion, when 100,000 dirhems were brought to that Excellency, he had them all forthwith poured out on a mat and divided amongst the people, so that, on rising up, not a single dirhem remained in his hand.

The meekness of that prince was such that he endured all the persecution from relatives and strangers without a thought of revenge, but rather blessing them for it. Abd er Rahman said, 'The Apostle of God was the meekest and most patient of the people, and could better suppress his anger than any of them.'

Uns Ibn Malik narrates that when he was once sitting in the mosque with a number of his companions, and had wrapped himself in a mantle of Nejran, there suddenly came a Bedouin, seized that cloak, and so pulled at it that that prince's blessed shoulder touched the Bedouin's breast, and the edge of the cloak left a mark on that Excellency's blessed bosom. His Excellency looked at the Bedouin, and said, ' What wilt thou?' The Bedouin answered, 'Command that some part of the wealth thou possessest may be given to me.' His Excellency the prophet then ordered that something should be given him. Men of research have remarked that the persecutions did not affect that Excellency, because his mind and eye were looking towards God and regarding His favour. That Excellency counted it incumbent on himself to fulfil engagements, and he never broke a promise. It is related that once, before his mission, he sold something to someone, and that this person, not having the whole price with him, said to his Excellency, ' Stop here, till I go and fetch the remainder of what I have to pay.' Then that person went away, but forgot all about his promise, till after three days, when it came back to his mind, and he at once took what he was owing and still found his Excellency in his former place, only saying to him, 'Young man, thou hast put me to inconvenience: for on account of thy promise I have been waiting here ever since.'

In courage and bravery no one could equal that prince. Uns Ibn Malik affirmed, 'The Apostle of God is the best of men, the bravest of men, and the most generous of men.'

Of that Excellency's bashfulness and modesty, the recorder records, 'The Apostle of God was more bashful than a virgin in her veil' Owing to his great modesty, a change would come over his face, when he saw anything loathsome in a person, though without remarking upon it to that person.

In the enumeration of the Prophet's qualities, it is declared that his heart was kind to creatures, his bosom joyous, and yet always weeping from the fear of God ; that he was high in sadness and great in hope, remembering favours always, and he was of a kindly disposition and noble acts, keeping secrets hid, and yet the confidant of heaven; he was amicable, meek, affectionate, and tender, a lover of hospitality, benevolent, wise, assiduous in the cause of God, a fulfiller of promises, a diligent servant of God, and one seeking after Divine approval.

That blessed prince's nature was to help others and he often also offered up prayer for rain. Sometimes he first ascended the pulpit and delivered an address, and sometimes, without doing so, he recited the prayer for rain in the place where he was sitting. It is also established that during that prayer he held up the back-side of his hands towards heaven. When a storm was blowing, and clouds were seen, the visage of that Excellency showed signs of distress ; and he would go inside and not come out again as long as this lasted ; but as soon as rain began to come down, that state passed off, and he cheered up. Aisha the faithful narrates that on her asking the Prophet for an explanation of this, he replied, 'O Aisha, lest what happened to the people of Ad should happen again; for when they saw clouds of punishment in the sky, they said, "These clouds come to bring us rain," whereas that was a storm and clouds bringing them a grievous punishment.' His Excellency the prophet also said, 'The wind is from the Spirit of God: it brings gracious rain to His friends, and sore punishment to His enemies.' When once someone was cursing the storm in that prophet's presence, he said, 'Do not curse the storm, for it is a commissioned officer, and, verily, whoever curses what is undeserving of curse, on him will that curse return.' Ibn Abbas narrates, that there never was a storm or thundering without that prince kneeling down to pray.

During an eclipse that prince used to say two genuflexions of the eclipse-service. Ibn Abbas relates that he was present once when the Prophet recited that prayer, and that on that occasion he prolonged the standing up to an unusual extent, about as long as it would take to read the second Sura, and that as soon as the prayer was over, the sun reappeared. The Prophet also said, 'Truly, sun and moon are signs of God; but although their eclipse does not portend any one's life or death, yet, if you see any, remember God.' His friends said to him, 'O Apostle of God, we saw that whilst thou wast saying the prayer, thou didst grasp at something, and then let it go again.' His Excellency replied, 'Verily, I have seen Paradise, and I wanted to seize one of the branches of its vines; if I had taken it, you could have been eating therefrom till eternity sets in. I have also seen hell.'

Be it known that his apostolic Excellency also paid visits to the sick, and commanded his friends to do the same. When he went to see a sick person, he used to say, 'Please God, no misfortune, but purification or 'Atonement and purification.' He seated himself on the sick person's cushion, and inquired, 'How art thou? What is thy condition? Hast thou a fancy for anything?' If the person fancied a thing that was not hurtful, he ordered it to be given. He would lay his right hand on the sick person's body, and say, 'Remove the ban, Thou Lord of man! O Healer, heal, relieve! There is no cure Besides Thy cure: Help, Helper, we believe.'

In every action of his life, Muhammad's intense affection for the Jews could be seen, as his beloved wife Sophia was a Jewish widow who begged Muhammad to marry her and they lived happily for many years.

Soon after arriving in Medina, Muhammad began to assist the native Medinan residents in their daily lives, and soon, proved himself to be a visionary leader. The Muslim Prophet Muhammad's tried to create a historically unprecedented written constitution for his new city-state, which would soon be known as Medina al-Nabi, namely, the City of the Prophet. It decreed that Jews and Muslim were both believers. It stipulated that all citizens were equal. According to early Muslim sources, all the Jewish tribes of Medina and the surrounding region made terms with the Prophet. Nonetheless, at a later date, some Jewish tribes changed their minds and plotted to overthrow the Prophet with the help of the pagans of Mecca. Accounts of the events are cloudy and inconsistent. Some sources suggest that some tribes were exiled. Others allege that several male combatants of one tribe were condemned to death for treason, as per the judgement of one of their Jewish friend and ally who judged them according to Jewish

laws, while some women who tried to poison Arabs and their children were subjected to exile. This entire episode is disputed by both Muslim and non-Muslim historians and cannot be treated as historical fact. All we know for certain is that the Muhammad came into conflict with segments of the Jewish community. His loyal Jewish allies, however, continued to live in Medina and stand by his side until the rest of his life and he in turn, loved them most passionately.

Internal conflict had taken place between rival Jewish communities in Medina for hundreds of years, but they always managed to resolve it among themselves with the aid of their highly efficient chiefs and Rabbis. However, upon the arrival of Muhammad in their midst, the Arabs were eager to accept him as the arbiter, but the Jews continued to live according to their own Rabbinic laws and religious customs.

With the passing of the centuries, different versions of history were told by some of the Jews who had left Medina voluntarily, and soon, some Muslims and non-Muslims began to think that Muhammad had somehow oppressed his Jewish friends and executed several men. The issue became more complicated, because the alleged massacre of the Jews coloured the perception of Jews for some Muslims and the perception of Muslims for some non-Muslims, particularly Jews and Christians, who used it to condemn Islam as a whole. This was akin to the attitude of many Christians who for thousands of years, accused Jews of killing Jesus and even hate them all as a whole. It is similar to the attitude of some Muslims who, as a result of events in the world, condemn most Jews for intolerable actions committed by a certain number of them, and thereby espouse anti-Jewish sentiments.

In Godfrey Higgin's, the noble English man and author of the book, "An apology for the life and character of the prophet Mohamed", the British magistrate and landowner claimed that in the modern discourse, the filial relationship between the Jews of Medina and the Arabs of Medina have been overlooked. Muslim-Jewish relations are not limited to a single conflict that supposedly took place in the seventh century. The fact of the matter is that, despite periods of problems, Muslims and Jews have co-existed peacefully for the larger part of the past 1400 years. Jews fled Christian persecution in Europe to find safety and security in the Muslim world. The Sephardic Jews who were expelled from Spain in 1492 were embraced with open arms by the Ottomans. Moriscos and Marranos, crypto-Muslims and crypto-Jews, also suffered together in Catholic Spain and often intermarried. The historical basis for Judeo-Muslim solidarity is very evident.

WOMAN AND HER RIGHTS IN ISLAM:

Muslim jurists say that during the many centuries that followed Muhammad, women of the Islamic society had much higher social position than the non-Muslim women of that time. During the Middle Ages, some Muslims were horrified to see how women were treated in Europe and the crusader states, and some European government and scholars denounced Islam for giving too much powers to menials like women and slaves, because Muhammad gave women their rights in a time when women were nothing but the property of men. By introducing the Islamic religion, Muhammad gave women the right to buy and sell on their own, own business and express views politically. These were all the basic rights which the modern woman was not granted until recently, but Muslims are often accused of being racist, misogynist, rapist and terrorist, something Catholic priest have faced for many years.

With billions of pornographic films displaying almost only White women and vilifying their bodies, foreigners who watch these and harbour aspirations of occupying Europe or America might even believe that all White women and men are sex slaves, and they will have no doubt that every single white person will be happy to serve them as sex slaves and wear a leash on their necks, because this is the state which we had been reduced into. Since White children have been made into sex slaves, most adolescents in our country regularly view pornography and can access it via free websites on mobile devices, and for children, such exposure to violent pornography is not only traumatic but causes them to lose their sense of morality.

However, any attempt by mothers to ban such content or porn websites is attacked by sex activists, who consider it a basic human right to watch and distribute sexual movies.

Parents who try to be proactive and talk to their children about the harms of sexual activities or the dangers of pornography are considered bigoted zealots who are curtailing their children's right to free sex. In today's society, adolescents are viewing online pornographic videos with motions and sounds, depicting every potential sexual act that can be imagined, and among American high school students, nearly ninety percent viewed pornography and in another study of U.S. youth in late adolescence, 80.3 percent reported accessing pornography in 2020. Dutch

researchers also discovered that most 13 to 17 years olds, or about 70 percent of Dutch adolescents had already consumed sexually explicit internet material at baseline. Data from Pornhub confirmed that adolescent pornography exposure is a norm, and children who are exposed to dominant or aggressive sexual behaviours suffer from numerous health issues including self-objectification and body comparison.

Without religious values and traditional ethics, people in Europe and America will become enslaved both sexually and physically, as the average age of first pornography exposure for our children between 10 and 11 years old, and such exposure to pornographic videos of violent, forced, group, or brutal sexual acts are traumatic for our youths because they will think that what they are seeing is realistic, ethical, legal, and normal.

It is deplorable to see how pitifully White women are being objectified today, then 50 years ago, we were most honourable in both media and society, and American morality police would ensure that no white women were ever dishonoured or coerced to become naked. We have become worse than animals because hundreds of people sit around with a camera to film women in the act of sex, when we do not even subject wild boars and dogs to similar humiliations. A researcher claimed she wanted to show what breasts of women looked like and tell their stories. So, for two years, she photographed breasts.

The breasts of 100 women were photographed like lab animals, and the project culminated in 2015 with the release of a book and the launch of a humiliating exhibition, where the private bodies of women were exposed.

If we think about our status reasonably, without being surcharged with some form of degenerate sexual passion that has plagued much of the world, and consider that as human beings, we would never dream of objectifying a foul pig the way we allow the media to objectify White women. So much respect have we for animals as low as pigs, that no photographer would ever take pictures of a pig's breast or publish a book full of images of a cow's reproductive organs, and yet, women are reduced to such terrible status that their body parts are considered cheaper than a farm animal. This sex war is being waged only against women as our sensitivity, our soft heart and our righteousness are being used against us by the mainstream media, who stirs our emotions by constantly telling us sob stories about how it is vital that we permit every kind of sexual freedom to everyone, because if we prevent one old man from using the rear part of a young teenage boy's body, then the old perverted man may kill himself in sadness, and we must never be party to such cruelty and should therefore allow all forms of sexual degeneracies to take place in Europe and America.

Fifty years ago, we considered it a folly for an old man, who should treat youths as his son, to use the body of a vibrant young man to satisfy his sexual desires, without any possibility of honour, love, respect of procreation. As a medical student in New York, I lived in the midst of the AIDS scare in the eighties and I noticed how nurses in my hospital would shrink away in horror from men who were homosexual and diagnosed with HIV related illnesses. However, with the campaign of sex activists, our societies became passionate about homosexuality and now permits men to marry and sexually serve other men and boys. While homosexuality is legal today, incest and paedophilia might become legal in our nations tomorrow. Since the 1980s, the Man-Boy Love Association of North America, which is a paedophiles advocacy group, had been calling for young boys to be given permission to have sex with adult men. They have asked the government to lower the age of consent to toddlers, so they could freely abuse children with legal protection. Fifty years later, their campaign may also become successful like our homosexual sex activists, who had earned the right to wed men.

This sex pandemic is increasing each year, and as we have seen in the book above, where a hundred White women were coerced to bare their breast and the photos were published on the cover. Like the pre-Christian era, where pagan rituals required women to remain naked in some empires, or where even aristocratic women were forced to become prostitute once a week to ensure that no women remained chaste, or the rather recent laws where Hindu lower caste women were prevented from covering their breasts in India. Only after 1860, when the British arrived in the pagan nation and imposed their Victorian morality on the Indian region did women gain permission to keep their chest covered. Hindu authorities demanded hefty sums from poor women who were required to pay breast tax to retain their modesty, and popular stories where lower caste women would chop off their own breast and hand it to tax collectors in protest, are still available in history books. These pagan societies and heathen rituals did not allow women to cover bodies, much like the books and films of today, which display women's breast pictures.

In an attempt to ultimately humiliate the women, the author of the breast book brandished unedited photographs of hundreds of women's breasts on the cover page of the despicable book.

It was religion that granted women the right to wear clothes, with saints like Virgin Mary becoming embodiments of moral virtue, and as long as religion like Islam existed, it was obvious that women would be honoured by every society, as chaste and dignified people. But in order to ultimately humiliate women, the sex activists who have infected the sex plague into most spheres of society, have begun a desperate campaign to destroy all monotheistic religion from the face of earth, in order to make sure that no moral codes exist to protect women from exploitation.

This inevitably led some irreligious mercenary group to create a terrorist group known as ISIS, whose only objective was to frame Muslims from various crimes and make Islamic laws appear sexist and violent, and the terrorists publicly beheaded many Muslims and claimed they were obeying the laws of the Muslim deity, Alla. During my research in writing this book, I was surprised to hear some of my female Muslim peers complaining about how they were harassed by men who offered them money in exchange for writing a small diary or book detailing how they were sex slaves in ISIS bride markets. One Muslim women said she was approached by several men who promised to give her cash if she followed some guidelines and wrote about how she was raped by ISIS Muslim fighters and how she willingly became sex slave for Alla, and other women I spoke to said they were given freedom to write anything as long as they provided graphic sex experiences or even pose in a video and talk about their lived experience. They were told that they did not have to go to Iraq or Syria to write about their slavery experience, but merely give a fabricate first-hand account. This finally made me realise that it is possible, that like the Catholic priests who are framed for molestation cases, Muslim men are also being framed for sexual slavery and other crimes in the name of ISIS, and women, often genuinely Muslim, are paid to write incriminating stories about how they were sold in ISIS slave markets or auctioned off to Jihadi Johns inside brothels which were ironically situated inside Mosques, or Muslim worship places that have strict laws against any form of immorality taking place.

Prohibition of Slavery in Islam:

Muslims were never permitted to enslave any one, be they man or woman, and it was considered to be the gravest sin to forcibly capture a person and imprison them. Having any form of sexual relation with male or female prisoners was also completely forbidden. However, during the time of the Muslim prophet, hundreds of assassins would arrive in Yathrib to execute Muhammad and his friends and sometimes they would get caught after killing civilians or captured trying to flee the city, and in those cases, the men or women who had arrived to kill the Muslims were given a choice to pay blood money to the victim's family and be freed, or have a wealthy relative pay ransom and become free again. In many cases, the assassins would be women who prowled in the streets of Yathrib trying to kill unsuspecting Muslims, and they too would be tried for murder and given the same option to pay the blood money to the victim's family and be freed. During the early days of Islam, Osman, the son-in-law of Muhammad, had a servant girl, who often fetched bathing water for him, and he could be heard recoiling and warning her not to even look at him when he bathed. "Do not look at me," Osman used to say to his female servants, "for it is not permissible for you." It is established that even the merest glancing at female servants, prisoners or slaves was forbidden in Islam, therefore the act of sexual intercourse with them was an act of blasphemy. However, there was a clause in Islam which permitted female prisoners to marry a Muslim and have her ransom money waived, as according to Muslim beliefs, every debt and obligation which a woman owes to others becomes her husband's responsibility after her marriage, meaning the Muslim man would be the one responsible for paying the female assassin's ransom or blood money to the victim's family.

The Islamic prophet Muhammad is often accused of taking away women's rights, but in reality, Muhammad encouraged women to study and learn Islamic knowledge and science and law, breaking a ban which several previous religions had stipulated, which forbid women to acquire any religious knowledge or even touch religious texts. It also abolished the practice of marrying women without her consent. With Islam, Muhammad also made marriage settlement or dowry compulsory for men to give women at the time of marriage. It allowed a woman to require any amount of money and from her would-be husband in order for the marriage to be legalized. They were allowed to add marriage contracts and could add anything to it as long as it did not go against the Islamic obligatory laws and time limit, a woman was able to include deals including to stop the man from taking any other wives while being married to her. While other women of that time had little say in marriage nor could own any money before or after marriage, the men used to take innumerable amount of wives with no laws to bound them. Whilst in Islam, Muhammad ensured that a women had the right to earn, spend or keep her money before and after marriage, and

women were also allowed to spend from their husband's money as if it were their own. However, the husband could not take the money of his wife.

Muhammad gave women innumerable rights in regards of every law. And as for the physical protection of women, Muhammad's religion gave women the right to cover herself, which were not allowed in many other places. Every virtue and every sin were of equal weight in Islam be they be committed by a man or a woman. Britain and most of Europe, in the same period was just recovering from the lengthy Roman occupation. And the European society was a highly fragmented one, in which tribal wars and kingly struggles to gain control over the land and people were commonplace. With very few exceptions, women had little or no rights or active role to play in such affairs.

Muslims were enslaved, tortured and raped during the crusades primarily because the majority of the Crusaders were not white. Most of the fighters were Latin, Spanish and French and they did not adhere to any moral code, and thus, terrible pains were inflicted upon both Muslims and Jews. But despite the sufferings they faced, most Muslim writers are not obsessed with hating the European people, and they usually do not write books or article mentioning all the grief they faced. However, in most news channels across Europe and North America, Muslims are blamed for all the migrant-related crimes, and Muslim men are branded as terrorist, and Muslim women are believed to ISIS sex-slaves. If we want to live in peace, then we should learn from history and stop hating everyone and cease to blame Russians, Muslims or any other minority.

WIFE BEATING IN ISLAM:

In Islam there is absolutely no difference between men and women as far as their relationship to Allah is concerned, as both are promised the same reward for good conduct and the same punishment for evil conduct. The Qur'an says:

And for women are rights over men similar to those of men over women. (2:226)

The Qur'an, in addressing the believers, often uses the expression, 'believing men and women' to emphasize the equality of men and women in regard to their respective duties, rights, virtues and merits. It says:

For Muslim men and women, for believing men and women, for devout men and women, for true men and women, for men and women who are patient and constant, for men and women who humble themselves, for men and women who give in charity, for men and women who fast, for men and women who guard their chastity, and for men and women who engage much in Allah's praise, for them has Allah prepared forgiveness and great reward. (33:35)

This clearly contradicts the assertion of the Christian Fathers that women do not possess souls and that they will exist as sexless beings in the next life. The Qur'an says that women have souls in exactly the same way as men and will enter Paradise if they do good :

Enter into Paradise, you and your wives, with delight. (43:70)

Who so does that which is right, and believes, whether male or female, him or her will We quicken to happy life. (16:97)

The Qur'an admonishes those men who oppress or ill-treat women:

O you who believe! You are forbidden
to inherit women against their will.
Nor should you treat them with harshness,
that you may take away part of the dowry
you have given them - except when
they have become guilty of open lewdness.
On the contrary live with them
on a footing of kindness and equity.
If you take a dislike to them,
it may be that you dislike something
and Allah will bring about through it
a great deal of good. (4:19)

Considering the fact that before the advent of Islam the pagan Arabs used to bury their female children alive, make women dance naked in the vicinity of the Ka'ba during their annual fairs, and treat women as mere chattels and objects of sexual pleasure possessing no rights or position whatsoever, these teachings of the Noble Qur'an were revolutionary. Unlike other religions, which regarded women as being possessed of inherent sin and wickedness and men as being possessed of inherent virtue and nobility, Islam regards men and women as being of the same essence created from a single soul. The Qur'an declares:

O mankind! Reverence your Guardian-Lord, who created you from a single person, created, of like nature, his mate, and from this pair scattered (like seeds) countless men and women. Reverence Allah, through Whom you demand your mutual (rights), and reverence the wombs (that bore you); for Allah ever watches over you. (4:1)

The Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) said, "Women are the twin halves of men." The Qur'an emphasizes the essential unity of men and women in a most beautiful simile:

They (your wives) are your garment and you are a garment for them. (2:187)

Just as a garment hides our nakedness, so do husband and wife, by entering into the relationship of marriage, secure each other's chastity. The garment gives comfort to the body; so does the husband find comfort in his wife's company and she in his. "The garment is the grace, the beauty, the embellishment of the body, so too are wives to their husbands as their husbands are to them."

Islam does not consider woman "an instrument of the Devil", but rather the Qur'an calls her muhsana - a fortress against Satan because a good woman, by marrying a man, helps him keep to the path of rectitude in his life. It is for this reason that marriage was considered by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as a most virtuous act. He said: "When a man marries, he has completed one half of his religion."

False accusation against certain groups and communities are not a new phenomenon. Slavery and other forms of oppressions have been going on in the world for thousands of years, and while the actions were abominable, many times, wrong people have been accused of crimes they did not commit. The slave trade and sea piracy during the time of Queen Elizabeth I was one of the turbulent events of that time. While the plundering of Spanish ships by the privateers was technically legal in England, the Spanish did not see things the same way. To them Elizabeth's official sea pirates were nothing more than lawless pirates and they often tried to take revenge. In 1568, Spanish ships attacked and captured several English ships, and the English captain managed to escape to safety, and headed back alone to England. The tension between these nations was the cause of many skirmishes and even warfare, but

soon, English and European pirates began a more profitable business of slave trade. They captured Africans, Muslims and even people from West Africa and the Caribbean and sold them to other nations, including Americans. However, some of the most pitiful victims of this illegal slavery were the Muslim pilgrims, who voyaged from the Indian Ocean to perform pilgrimage in Mecca. Due to some falsified reports, and some unverified historical references, the Muslims are blamed for the slave trade that was going on at that time, and even today, thousands of research papers, videos and books are published, slandering Muslims and their prophets as slave owners, when their religion Islam prohibited enslaving humans, and Muhammad and his family emancipated over forty-thousand slaves in his lifetime.

God has created both men and women without subordination of one another. Islam has ensured gender equality and women's rights in every sphere of their life. Islam has guaranteed rights of men and women in an equal degree and there is no discrimination between men and women. But due to the prevailing socio-cultural norms and practices in some places, sometimes the guarantee of Islam do not get translated into tangible actions. Islam is the religion which liberated Muslim women by ensuring equal rights to them in comparison to their male fellow. There are some misconceptions prevailing in our world regarding women's rights in Islam. Sometimes Muslim women themselves falsely knew that they are backward and oppressed by their religion. Some make great mistake in presuming that all conduct and practices of a Muslim are connected to Islam. The prime object of this book is to pick out how rights of women are ensured in Islam. This study concludes with an allusion that women are not subordinate of men and indicate an avenue to identify properly women in the light of Islam. This research is actually qualitative in nature where only secondary data has been used. Analytical method was also used in this research. Data has been collected from various books, journals, holy Qur'an and sunnah (tradition) of the Prophet. This research finds that Islam does not deprive the women rather ensuring proper rights, dignity and status but due to lack of proper Islamic knowledge and awareness and sometimes to dominate or neglect some misconceptions prevailing in the world. To eliminate prevailing misconceptions regarding women rights in Islam proper Islamic knowledge and awareness of the women is essential. The core implication of this research is that it will play a vital role to eliminate prevailing misconceptions regarding women rights in Islam and to ensure the rights, dignity and status of women as given in Islam. This study will open a new avenue for scholars who will be able to contribute their knowledge and wisdom to ensure the position of women as given in Islam. This research includes only those rights of the women as guaranteed by Islam and it does not include constitutional rights or other rights ensured by the existing laws of the country.

While we live in a utopian world, and demand equal justice and rights for all, it becomes easy to generalise and accuse one group or nation of being inherently evil. When we receive a falsified information by reading a page of falsified history, where one nation is framed for attacking another, then it will be only natural to get angry and want to punish the guilty party, but the interesting thing about history is that it has been proven to be distorted time and time again. In recent years, there has been a euphoria over people's right to wed whom they desire, and love whom they wish to love. It has become customary to celebrate the wedding of persons of the same gender. Indeed, if anyone in our society remotely objects to the sexual union of a ninety-year-old woman with a nine-teen-year-old girl, then the person will be brutally criticised, fired from his or her workplace and face severe consequences. Such is the level of freedom and equality in our irreligious world. Since there are no God-given law or Commandments to mandate our social life, there is no guarantee that ten years later, incestuous relationships will be legalised. Could it be possible that a decade later, a father will be compelled to walk his son down the aisle to marry his mother, or grandmother, because the eighteen or twenty-year-old son has fallen in love with his own mother, or father, and wanted desperately to marry her or him? This sounds unlikely at the moment, but is it really? Why should a young boy be barred from wedding his grandfather or grandmother, especially if he comes out as an incestuous person. Will there be pride rallies for those people too? Will people in our society fling out banners and praise the boy for loving his mother sexually, and will they curse the father to death if he refuses to bless the marriage of his son with the mother? Indeed, it is possible that millions of people will paint their bodies in incestuous colours and march down the roads to support the child in marrying the parent, especially if the boy or girl tries to commit suicide if he is prevented from this incestuous relationship. Yes, it is understandable that some of us might feel positively zealous about a man seducing another man, and there are many organizations that will sell pride cake or rainbow flag to commemorate the sexual union between two or more men, and to eulogize a pride month is fine, but would not those selfless soldiers and veterans who are suffering from PTSD or after-combat trauma deserve more of our compassion and love? Should the ordinary citizen not be more proud of the courageous servicemen and women who are dying each day to keep our nations safe from all terrors, both foreign and domestic? Do those men who bravely face a knife-wielding assailant in a dark alley to save a woman from potential sexual assault deserve our praise more

persistently? How many months each year are we celebrating in pride of those men who give their lives to protect their women and children?

Undoubtedly, there is no discrepancy in Islam between men and women as far as their relationship to Allah in concerning as both are promised the same reward for good conduct and the same punishment for evil conduct. Allah says:

“And for women are rights over men similar to those of men over women.” (2: 228)

The holy Quran, in addressing the believers, often uses the expression “believing men and women” to accentuate the equality of both male and female in regard to their particular duties, rights, virtues and merits. Islam is such a religion which has first given to the women a place of dignity and honour because before the advent of Islam, there were huge discriminations towards women. Islam abolished inhumanity, inequality, discrimination towards women as well as gave a complete code of conduct for both male and female. Prior to the arrival of Islam, the pagan Arabs used to bury their female children alive, make women dance naked in the vicinity of Ka’ba during their annual fairs and treated women just like slaves or chattels and they used women only for their sexual contentment who possess no rights, dignity, honour or position (Doi, 1992). Unlike other religions, which regarded women as being possessed of inherent sin and wickedness and men are being possessed of inherent virtue and nobility, Islam treats men and women as being of the equal essence created from one soul. Allah says:

“O mankind, be mindful of your duty to your Lord, who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from the two created and spread many men and women”. (4:2)

Can men beat wives in Islam?

To understand the rights, honour, dignity and status of women in Islam, it is sufficient to judge the position of women before the advent of Islam. At that time, they were like slaves and most often their positions were worse than animals. The Prophet (peace be upon him) proposed to stop any sorts of torture, cruelty or inhuman to women. He showed greatness towards them. He advised the Muslims: “Fear Allah in respect of women.” And: “The best of you are them who behave best to their wives.” And: “A Muslim must not hate his wife, and if he is displeased with one bad quality in her, let him be pleased with one that is good.” And: “The more civil and kind a Muslim is to his wife, the more perfect in faith he is” (Doi, 1992). The Prophet (peace be upon him) was very much forceful in enjoining upon Muslims so that they are kind to the women. In his Farewell Pilgrimage (Hajj al-Wada), he directed those present, and through them all those Muslim whoever to came later, to be courteous and kinds towards women. He said: “Fear Allah regarding women. Verily you have married them with the trust of Allah, and made their bodies lawful with the word of Allah. You have got (rights) over them, and they have got (rights) over you in respect of their food and clothing according to your means” (Doi, 1992). In Islam spiritual equality have guaranteed for both men and women (Orakzai, 2014). Allah says, “Whoso does good whatever male or female, and is a believer, shall enter Paradise and they shall not be wronged a whit.” (4:125)

DOES ISLAM ALLOW WIFE-BEATING??

Regarding an allegation made by anti-Islamists, that in Islam, wife beating is permissible.

Wife beating anytime and for any reason is never allowed in Islam.

What some Muslims may or may not do is another discussion altogether. The teachings of Islam are however clear, and that is the basis upon which Islam has to be judged.

Wife beating is not allowed in Islam!

Before we start, I’d like to first say that because Arabic is a complex language, and because Allah Almighty purposely and carefully chose certain words to be placed in certain Noble Verses, I strongly believe that Allah Almighty allowed for the interpretation of NOT beating wives to be valid. In other words, a Muslim man would not be going against Allah Almighty’s Divine Will if he doesn’t beat his wife, and instead, deserts her by leaving the house and living for instance with his parents for a period of time until the disobedient wife comes back to her

senses, which would be as equivalent as the first interpretation, since the end result is the same, which is to discipline the bad wife and to get her back on the Right Path of what makes GOD Almighty satisfied with her.

Let us look at Noble Verses 4:34-36

“(34). Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means. Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient, and guard in (the husband’s) absence what Allah would have them guard. As to those women on whose part ye fear disloyalty and ill-conduct, admonish them (first), (Next), refuse to share their beds, (And last) set example to them; but if they return to obedience, seek not against them Means (of annoyance): For Allah is Most High, great (above you all).

(35). If ye fear a breach between them twain, appoint (two) arbiters, one from his family, and the other from hers; if they wish for peace, Allah will cause their reconciliation: For Allah hath full knowledge, and is acquainted with all things.

(36). Serve Allah, and join not any partners with Him; and do good- to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbours who are near, neighbours who are strangers, the companion by your side, the wayfarer (ye meet), and what your right hands possess: For Allah loveth not the arrogant, the vainglorious;”

The Arabic word used in Noble Verse 4:34 above is “idribuhunna”, which is derived from “daraba” which means “to set an example”. The thing with all of the Arabic words that are derived from the word “daraba” is that they don’t necessarily mean “hit”. The word “idribuhunna” for instance, could very well mean to “leave” them. It is exactly like telling someone to “beat it” or “drop it” in English.

Allah Almighty used the word “daraba” in Noble Verse 14:24

“Seest thou not how Allah sets (daraba) forth a parable?— A goodly Word Like a goodly tree, Whose root is firmly fixed, And its branches (reach) To the heavens”. “daraba” here meant “give an example”. If I say in Arabic “daraba laka mathal”, it means “give you an example”.

Allah Almighty also used the word “darabutum”, which is derived from the word “daraba” in Noble Verse 4:94, which mean to “go abroad” in the sake of Allah Almighty:

“O ye who believe! When ye go abroad (darabutum) In the cause of Allah, Investigate carefully, And say not to anyone Who offers you a salutation: ‘Thou art none of a Believer!’ Coveting the perishable good of this life: with Allah Are profits and spoils abundant. Even thus were ye yourselves Before, till Allah conferred on you His favours: therefore Carefully investigate. For Allah is well aware of all that ye do. (The Noble Quran, 4:94)”

So “daraba” literally means “hit”, or “go abroad”, or “give” but not in the sense to give something by hand, but rather to give or provide an example.

Important Note: Notice how Allah Almighty in Noble Chapter (Surah) He used “daraba (4:34” and “darabutum(4:94)”, which are both derived from the same root. He used both words in the same Chapter, which tells me that “daraba” in Noble Verse 4:34 means to desert or leave, since that’s what its derived word meant in Noble Verse 4:94. The next section below will further prove my point.

I am sure there are more Noble Verses that used words derived from “daraba” in the Noble Quran, but these are the only ones I know of so far. In the case of Noble Verse 4:34 where Allah Almighty seems to allow men to hit their wives after the two warnings for ill-conduct and disloyalty, it could very well be that Allah Almighty meant to command the Muslims to “leave” the home all together and desert their wives for a long time in a hope that the wives would then come back to their senses and repent.

So, it is not the thrashing or hitting proposed by ignorant people. The word used in the Quran has many meanings which are equally viable.

If we take the meaning of daraba to give them a sign that what they are doing is wrong. It is not to BEAT them up.

If we take the other meanings, it means to remove oneself from their presence. The best example of the teachings of the Quran is Prophet Muhammad. If we look at the conduct of the prophet, he NEVER mistreated his wives, which

clearly shows the Qur'an does not allow wife beating. He had problems with them just as anyone would, but he did not beat them. If the Quran allows for it, then why wouldn't the prophet of Islam do it??

Noble Verses and Sayings that support the prohibition of wife-beating:

The following Noble Verses and Sayings from the Noble Quran and Prophet Muhammad respectively seem to very well support the above interpretation.

“...Do not retain them (i.e., your wives) to harm them...” (The Noble Quran, 2:231)

“If a wife fears cruelty or desertion on her husband's part, there is no blame on them if they arrange an amicable settlement between themselves; and such settlement is best; even though men's souls are swayed by greed. But if ye do good and practise self-restraint, God is well-acquainted with all that ye do.” (The Noble Quran, 4:128)

Narrated Mu'awiyah al-Qushayri God be pleased with him): “I went to the Apostle of Allah and asked him: What do you say (command) about our wives? He replied: Give them food what you have for yourself, and clothe them by which you clothe yourself, and do not beat them, and do not revile them.” (Sunan Abu-Dawud, Book 11, Marriage (Kitab Al-Nikah), Number 2139)

Narrated Mu'awiyah ibn Haydah: “I said: Apostle of Allah, how should we approach our wives and how should we leave them? He replied: Approach your tilth when or how you will, give her (your wife) food when you take food, clothe when you clothe yourself, do not revile her face, and do not beat her.” (Sunan Abu-Dawud, Book 11, Marriage (Kitab Al-Nikah), Number 2138)

Abu Hurairah reported Allah's Apostle as saying: “He who believes in Allah and the Hereafter, if he witnesses any matter he should talk in good terms about it or keep quiet. Act kindly towards woman, for woman is created from a rib, and the most crooked part of the rib is its top. If you attempt to straighten it, you will break it, and if you leave it, its crookedness will remain there. So act kindly towards women. (Translation of Sahih Muslim, The Book of Marriage (Kitab Al-Nikah), Book 008, Number 3468)”

“O ye who believe! Ye are forbidden to inherit women against their will. Nor should ye treat them with harshness, that ye may take away part of the dower [money given by the husband to the wife for the marriage contract] ye have given them, except where they have been guilty of open lewdness; on the contrary live with them on a footing of kindness and equity. If ye take a dislike to them it may be that ye dislike a thing, and God brings about through it a great deal of good. (The Noble Quran, 4:19)”

“And among God's signs is this: He created for you mates from amongst yourselves (males as mates for females and vice versa) that you might find tranquillity and peace in them. And he has put love and kindness among you. Herein surely are signs for those who reflect. (The Noble Quran 30:21)”

“Women impure for men impure. And women of purity for men of purity. These are not affected by what people say. For them is forgiveness and an honourable provision. (The Noble Quran 24:26)”

Narrated Abu Huraira: “Allah's Apostle said, ‘The strong is not the one who overcomes the people by his strength, but the strong is the one who controls himself while in anger. (Translation of Sahih Bukhari, Good Manners and Form (Al-Adab), Volume 8, Book 73, Number 135)”

Narrated Abu Huraira: “A man said to the Prophet , ‘Advise me! ‘The Prophet said, ‘Do not become angry and furious.’ The man asked (the same) again and again, and the Prophet said in each case, ‘Do not become angry and furious.’ (Translation of Sahih Bukhari, Good Manners and Form (Al-Adab), Volume 8, Book 73, Number 137)”

Abu Huraira (God be pleased with him) reported: “I heard Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) as saying: One is not strong because of one's wrestling skilfully. They said: Allah's Messenger, then who is strong? He said: He who controls his anger when he is in a fit of rage. (Translation of Sahih Muslim, The Book of Virtue, Good Manners and Joining of the Ties of Relationship (Kitab Al-Birr was-Salat-I-wa'l-Adab), Book 032, Number 6314)”

Allah Almighty loves those who restrain anger: “Those who spend (freely), whether in prosperity, or in adversity; who restrain anger, and pardon (all) men; for Allah loves those who do good. (The Noble Quran, 3:134)”

Linguistic element:

The key to the problem is the mistranslation of the two key words nushuz and adriboo. Some of the possible meanings for both the words are given below. Again, the appropriate meaning will depend on the context of the verse.

Nushuz: Animosity, hostility, rebellion, ill-treatment, discord; violation of marital duties on the part of either husband or wife.

Adriboo (root: daraba): to beat, to strike, to hit, to separate, to part.

In the context of the above verse the most appropriate meaning for nushuz is ‘marital discord’ (ill-will, animosity etc), and for adriboo is ‘to separate’ or ‘to part’.

Otherwise, it is inviting the likelihood of a divorce without any reconciliation procedure. Such a step would blatantly contravene the Qur’anic guidance shown in verse 4:35 below. Therefore, a more accurate and consistent translation of the above verse would be:

(4:34) [...]as for those women whose animosity or ill-will you have reason to fear, then leave them alone in bed, and then separate; and if thereupon they pay you heed, do not seek a way against them.

The separation could be temporary or permanent depending on the reconciliation procedure. Such a construction is legitimate within the terms of the language and fits in very well with the divorce procedure outlined in the Qur’ān (see 8:5).

The verse following the above verse gives further weight to the above translation.

(4:35) And if ye fear a breach between them twain (the man and the wife), appoint an arbiter from his folk and an arbiter from her folk. If they desire amendment Allah will make them of one mind. Lo! Allah is ever Knower, Aware.

Added weight to the meanings outlined above is given by verse 4:128 quoted below. Here, in the case of a man, the same word nushuz is used, but it is rendered as ‘ill-treatment’ as against ‘rebellion’ in the case of a woman as shown earlier in the traditional translation of verse 4:34. One finds oneself asking whether since the ill-treatment is on the part of the husband, a process of reconciliation is here to be encouraged!

(4:128) If a wife fears ill-treatment (nushuz) or desertion on her husband’s part, there is no blame on them if they arrange an amicable settlement between themselves; and such settlement is best[...]

This, obviously, is a double standard and the only way to reconcile the meanings of the two verses, in the contexts they are being used, is to accept the meaning of adribooas: ‘to separate’ or to ‘part’. In this connection I would like to refer the reader to an excellent article by Rachael Tibbet from which I quote:

(a) Qur’anic commentators and translators experience problems with the term Adribu in the Qur’ān not just in this verse but in others, as it is used in different contexts in ways which appear ambiguous and open to widely different translations into English. ‘Daraba’ can be translated in more than a hundred different ways.

(b) The translation of adribu as ‘to strike’ in this particular verse (4:34) is founded upon nothing more than:

(i) The authority of hadiths (Abu Dawud 2141 and Mishkat Al-Masabih 0276) that this is what Adribumeans in this context.

(ii) The prejudices and environment of the early commentators of the Qur’ān which led them to assume that ‘to strike’, given the overall context of the verse, was the most likely interpretation of the many possible interpretations of adribu.

Conclusion: Wife beating is not prescribed in the Qur’ān.

THE SLANDER OF POLYGAMY:

How are women treated in Islam?

Women are highly respected in Islam and treating them with respect has been made incumbent on all men. One thousand four hundred and fifty years ago, when Islam came on the scene, it nullified and negated the concept of polygamy.

Before Islam, women were considered shameful, female children were buried alive, prostitution was rampant, divorce was only in the hands of the husband, inheritance was only for the strong, and oppression was widespread. Islam came and abolished these practices. Even now, in "developed countries", women are not always granted due respect, dignity and honor, let alone equal pay for equal work. Islam, however, regards women as precious and valuable, not to be disrespected or disgraced. The mistreatment of women in some Middle-Eastern countries or Muslim families is due to cultural factors that some Muslims wrongly follow, not because of Islam. Why would many women around the world willingly enter Islam if it is an oppressive religion?

In this religion, women are often granted more privilege than men. The weaker someone is physically, the more rights Islam gives them. The concept that Islam gives women any less rights than men are completely wrong and inaccurate, unfounded, unjust and grossly ill-informed.

Not all cultures and societies have been fair to women. Some fascist institutions believed that men are superior to women. Female students in those places were required to pay double the fees in schools and universities. Until today, women in our western societies do not receive equal salary as men. In Vermont, women must obtain written permission from their husbands to wear false teeth. In Montana, it's a felony for a wife to open her husband's mail. In Michigan, a woman may not cut her own hair without her husband's permission. In Islam, no prejudicial distinction is made between the individuals of a society whether women, men, wealthy, poor, young or old. Social standing, profession, wealth, or gender do not make people enjoy particular privileges.

The life of women in the pre-Islamic period when female infanticide was the norm and when women had no rights at all, were no better treated than livestock. Like slaves, women were treated as an inferior species who had no legal existence. In such a primitive world, what Prophet Muhammad achieved for women was extraordinary. The very idea that a woman could be a witness or could inherit anything at all in her own right was astonishing.

In fact, during the many centuries that followed Prophet Muhammad, women of the Islamic society had much higher social position than the non-Muslim women of that time. During the Middle Ages the Muslims were horrified to see the way westerners treated their women in Europe and the crusader states, and The European government and Christian scholars denounced Islam for giving too much powers to menials like women and slaves.

Islam first gave women their rights in a time when women were nothing but the property of men. Islam gave women the right to buy and sell on their own, control business and express views politically. These were all the basic rights which the American woman was not granted until recently,

Islam encouraged women to study and learn Islamic knowledge and science and law, breaking a ban which several religions had stipulated, which forbid women to acquire any religious knowledge or even touch religious texts. It also abolished the practice of marrying women without her consent.

Islam also made marriage settlement or dowry compulsory for men to give women at the time of marriage. It allowed a woman to require any amount of money and from her would-be husband in order for the marriage to be legalized. In Islam women had the right to earn, spend or keep her money before and after marriage.

Islam gave women innumerable rights in regards to every law. Thus, one would have to be very ignorant indeed to refuse that Islam was the first liberator of womankind.

In Britain and most of Europe, women had little or no rights or active role to play in daily affairs. As the dawn of Islam was starting to illuminate the long shadow of oppression on women and slaves, the French civilization in the same period (586 CE) only after Muhammad (Peace be upon him) migrated to Madinah and Islam became prevalent, the French were claiming compassion and civility by passing a law and resolution, after great deliberation and controversy, that women can be classified as a human being and not an animal, however she is created for the sole purpose of serving man.

How did Women fare in the GREEK AND ROMAN CIVILIZATIONS?

In the days of ignorance, prior to the advent of Islam, women in many cultures throughout the world were considered little more than commodities, objects of desire to be bought and sold like livestock.

According to Professor Wil Durant, "In Rome, the man alone had any rights before the law in the early republic; he alone could buy, hold or sell property, or make contracts. Even his wife's dowry in this period belonged to him; if his wife was accused of a crime, she was committed to him for judgement, and he could punish her by condemning her to death for infidelity or for stealing the keys to his wine cellar. Over his children he had the power of life, death and sale into slavery. If the child was deformed or female, the father was permitted by custom to expose it to death."

The Greeks considered women to belong to the third or lowest rank of society. If a woman gave birth to a deformed child, it was common practice to kill her. In Sparta, which was acknowledged as an elite society, a woman who could no longer bear children was put to death.

WHAT ABOUT WOMEN'S RIGHT IN JUDAISM?

Orthodox Jews parents, on the birth of a male child, invite guests to a Kiddush, a celebratory meal after Sabbath, where there is no such custom after the birth of a female child. There are no parallel celebration for women in Jewish custom. The inequality and injunction towards female oppression is further to be found in the law relating to divorce. A woman has no right of divorce. Even if her husband disappears without trace, without the evidence of his death, she cannot remarry. A man has the only right of divorce, and many men have abused this right by abandoning women but not divorcing them, thereby restricting them to remarry. According to Le Bonn the male Orthodox Jew solemnly recites, "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, that I was not born a female".

HINDUISM'S TREATMENT OF WOMEN:

Women fared little better in other belief-systems. In Hinduism, the perfect woman is the pativrata, the devoted wife whose entire existence is dedicated to her husband. The very word pativrata says it all: "she whose vow (vista) is to her husband (pati)". During her lifetime, the good Hindu wife is expected to regard her husband as her own personal god, and after a blameless life she must take her own life on her husband's funeral pyre. This horrific rite, known as satee, was until very recently still being practiced in India, and the government has had to intervene to abolish it. Nevertheless, for devout Hindus a woman who is satee is worshipped as a goddess, the perfect example of the self-sacrificing wife.'

The Darwinist Roots of the Hostility to Women:

Fascists did not merely appropriate the idea of the inequality between the races from Darwinism, they also adopted the idea that men were superior to women.

In The Descent of Man, Darwin wrote that women have characteristic of the lower races, and therefore of a past and lower state of civilization.

Another follower of Darwin, the evolutionist social psychologist Gustave Le Bon, wrote that in the most intelligent races... are a large number of women whose brains are closer in size to those of gorillas than to the most developed male brains. This inferiority is so obvious that no one can contest it for a moment; only its degree is worth discussion..."

Other irreligious Darwinists stated that "Women... represent the most inferior forms of human evolution and... are closer to children and savages than to an adult, civilized man."

Mussolini's taking away of women's social rights, and Hitler's building of "breeding farms" to reproduce the superior race and obliging young girls to sleep with SS officers, are all reflections of fascists' attitudes to women. Both Darwinists and fascists see women as an inferior and backward species, and both despise them, as well as employing discriminatory and oppressive methods against them.

This fascist perspective is completely at odds with the ethics of the Koran. Allah has commanded in the Koran that women should be cherished, respected, and protected. In addition, He has shown examples of women with superior

morals, such as Mary and the wife of Pharaoh. In the eyes of God, superiority does not lie in race, sex or rank, but in closeness to Him and strength of belief. In a number of verses of the Koran, God has revealed that all believers will receive their reward without discrimination between men and women.

The Lord speaks in Surah Al-Imran of the Koran, "I will not let the deeds of any doer among you go to waste, male or female—you are both the same in that respect..." (Verse 195)

In verse 124 of Surah an Nisa, 124, Allah announces: "Anyone, male or female, who does right actions and is a believer, will enter the Garden. They will not be wronged by so much as the tiniest speck."

The One Lord speaks in Surah An- Nahl of the Koran: "Anyone who acts rightly, male or female, being a believer, We will give them a good life and We will recompense them according to the best of what they did." (Verse 97)

Why are there rumours about Islam that it is a proponent of polygamy?

In pre-Islamic Arabia, the pagans of Mecca were infuriated with Muhammad when he called upon them to shun slavery, adultery, polygamy and larceny. They decided to taint his reputation by spreading false rumours about his conjugal life and marriage.

Who did Muhammad marry?

At the age of twenty-five, Muhammad married an entrepreneur named Khadeejah, a woman who was fifteen years his senior. He lived happily with her as long her entire lifetime. After the death of his first wife, Muhammad was grieving bitterly but he reluctantly entered into an official marriage with an elderly widow by the name of Sauda.

There have been no prophetic narrations or Koran verse that confirms Muhammad took any other women as his wedded wife. In the final years of his life, there has been two or three incidence of contractual marriage in which severely ill or elderly women and widows, who had no means of livelihood and begged the Prophet to marry them so that they would have a noble position in society, were granted their wishes. However, it should be noted that Muhammad never engaged in sexual relations with any woman except his first wife Khadeejah. He never consummated his marriage with other women, because he was a man of God, devoted to worship.

Some men have oppressed women from time immemorial and they continue to find excuses to mistreat their wives. It is possible that those people came up with the absurd idea that Islam permits or orders men to take multiple sexual partners via marriage. Where they found religion, they used it suppress women, much like the way Law was used to repress women until very recently. Only a century ago was the United States generous enough to let women vote.

Prior to that, English Common Law deprived women of money, status and even her own identity.

In Ancient Greece, Athenian women remained the property of their fathers who could have them marry anyone against her wishes.

Under Roman law, the husband had absolute power over his wife, and could even justifiably kill her. Not to mention traditional Hindu cultures which required a widow to immolate herself after her husband's death. In the absence of any kind of religion, the world had proven itself to be treacherous.

Understandably, the laws, crafted, edited, and validated chiefly by men would be unable to sufficiently address women's rights.

While there are certain laws in place guaranteeing equality of men, women and non-binary people but who could guarantee that situation for women will not regress in the near or far future?

Islam, as a final revealed religion of One God, offered human beings, unalterable laws that guaranteed equality and justice for all. But while man-made laws have attempted to borrow from the Islamic principles, there are consequences of laws written by men. In the name of freedom, of course, women in certain places are being banned from concealing their hair. They do not yet have the right to equal pay. It is grievous to imagine what miseries the future stores for women. The prospects may well be dark. Women, today, are being vilified by leaders, objectified by the media and dismissed by the law.

The assumption that religion or Islam suppresses women's right is unfounded. Before the Renaissance, pre-civilized Europe treated women poorly, as have been the case in recent times.

There was an uproar in the media over a controversial clothing ban on women. Women were required by law to keep their head uncovered in certain parts of Europe. The law forbade women from wearing scarves but no such rules applied to men. Men in France were at liberty to don hats or helmets. These men banned headscarves or hijabs for women by using fellow women to preach oppression in the name of freedom. However, the situation swiftly became tragic when armed police, forced a woman on a beach, at gun point to remove her swimsuit. Because she had worn a head covering. The woman in question was a mother and a French citizen for generations. The secular man-made law forced a mother to undress in public while her children were crying next to her and other people on the beach were jeering. It was merely an example of men using the law to demean women.

Pagan Europe as well as pre-Islamic Arabia deprived women from basic civil rights such as the right to cover one's body. Aside from general oppressions, female infanticide was common in pagan Arabia as well as in ancient Rome. In the early 7th century, a man named Muhammad rose to prominence in Arabia for preaching theism, calling for equal treatment for women and men and slaves in law and religion. Naturally, Europe along with the rest of the world was shocked. They denounced Muhammad for granting women civil rights, such as inheritance, earnings, political power and religious authority. Female scholars reigned supreme in nearly all aspects of Islamic literature and jurisprudence, at a period where to associate literacy with women was unthinkable in Europe. Some nations began to amend their own laws to make it more woman-friendly, while pagan Arabs cursed and belittled Muhammad for granting women and slaves so much freedom for the first time, it was the first religious or political dogma that gave men, women and slaves same position in the eyes of God, same sin, same punishment and same reward and same religious duties. In 586 A.D., only after Muhammad had migrated to Medina and Islam became prevalent, the French parliament claimed compassion and civility by passing a resolution, after great deliberation and controversy that women could be classified as humans, but were created for the sole purpose to serve man! Before this, women were officially termed as 'animals' and in certain parts of Paris, did not have the privilege to wear clothes.

The laws of 7th century French-parliament were patriarchal, but what is horrifying is that in today's civilized world, women are being steadily reduced to the degraded status they had occupied centuries earlier. A decade later, a politician could decide that woman must not vote or hold public office. I would have imagined such a possibility is unlikely had I not witnessed firsthand how even a basic civil right, such as wearing clothes had already been seized from women, and that too by a country that claims to be a beacon of liberty and champion of modernity.

In today's world, we see there is ban on wearing veil by women taking effect in many major cities, like Paris and Nice, Belgium. Wearing head or face-coverings for women resulted in punitive measures. Women who venture out with veils or facial covering could end with hefty fines or occasional jail time, but some young women are continually defying such unfair laws and persist in exercising their civil rights. Few intergovernmental bodies confronted on whether the scarf-ban is legal, although human rights groups such as Amnesty International claims the ban on women's clothing appeared to infringe civil liberties.

Other cities in Europe also banned full-body swimsuit in beaches. However, as an expression of male-defiance, some brave women who have the courage to stand up to those misogynistic men are defying imprisonments and fines in order to stand up for the right to wear a veil and full-sleeved swimsuits. Those women felt it was subterranean patriarchy for men to dictate which part of a women's body they wished to see.

MUHAMMAD AND THE JEWS:

Did Muhammad massacre Jews in Yathrib?

Muslim Prophet Muhammad and the Jews of Yathrib: Muslims and their prophet Muhammad have been accused of many deadly crimes, and one widely false idea held by critics, and believed and circulated by bigots, is that some Jewish men of Banu Qurayza were killed presumably because of the inherent hatred Arabs or the religion Islam had towards Jews as a race.

However, as we have seen from the life of Muhammad, that his own mother came from a Jewish family in Yathrib, and therefore, the theory that Muslims hated Jews were baseless lies. The historical reports say that some of the Banu Qurayza men were killed because they actively committed the crime of treason, waged war and supplied the

enemies of the Arabs with weapons and supplies, while they had a pact with the Muslims that they would not do any of this. And, since the Banu Qurayza were Arab Jews, it was inconceivable for Arabs to hate other Jews just for their race.

Muslims and the Arab Jews have been living in peace and harmony for centuries, from the time of the Prophet Muhammed to this. There are authentic historical reports where the prophet Muhammad, even after the Banu Qurayza incident, showed love, mercy, and kindness to Jews.

Had Muhammad really hated Jews as some critics claim, why did he free all those who partook in the treachery? The evidences shown below indicate that the Muslim prophet never killed any Jew from Banu Qurayza's warriors and merely asked the criminals to leave town because they broke the pact, waged war, and supplied enemies with weapons against the Muslims.

There are a number of incidents in which the Muslim Prophet Muhammad and his companions showed utmost respect to Jews. In his book, 'An Apology for Muhammad and the Koran', orientalist John Davenport states that since the Islamic faith never taught its followers to be antisemitic, Muhammad and his friends were very fond of the Jews of Medina. It seems that the Arab-Israeli conflict of this era is a political conflict which started only after 1948, whereas Muslims, Christians and Jews have lived in that area for centuries in perfect harmony.

Even the holy book Koran tells Muslims that Kosher food prepared by Jews are allowed for Muslims and the religion of Islam accepts and respects all Jewish Prophets such as Moses, Solomon, David, Abraham etc.

The Prophet Muhammad was always eager to express his love and affection for the Jews of Yathrib so when he was asked by one his Companions why he stood up for a Jewish funeral procession, he remarked that we are all equal in death. Respect was given to a funeral of a Jew at time of Mohamet when a bier passed before the Prophet and he stood up. He was told that he the dead man was a Jew. Upon this he remarked: Was he not a human being or did he not have a soul?

On another occasion, a visibly emotional Muhammad rose to honour a funeral of a Jews, and all his companion who noticed his emotional state, immediately stood up for it and even went to carry it, but then they found that it was a funeral of a Jew. They, therefore said: Messenger of Allah, this is the funeral of a Jew. Their prophet said: Death is fearful event, so when you see a funeral, stand up.

The Muslim Prophet also had a Jewish wife called Sophia and he loved her most dearly, and once, another one of the Prophet's wives, called her, 'daughter of a Jew' and upon hearing this, Muhammad became upset and he cautioned her to "Fear God". He was not happy with her to call Sophia such a disrespectful term, and reprimanded her to think about what she says because she would be held liable for hurting her.

Later, when Sophia heard that some Arab women criticised her Jewish ancestry, she became sad and wept. When the Prophet said that she was crying, he said: 'What makes you cry?'

Sophia replied, "They said that I am the daughter of a Jew."

So, the Prophet Muhammad said at once: 'And you are the daughter of a Prophet, and your uncle is a Prophet, and you are married to a Prophet, so what is she boasting to you about?'

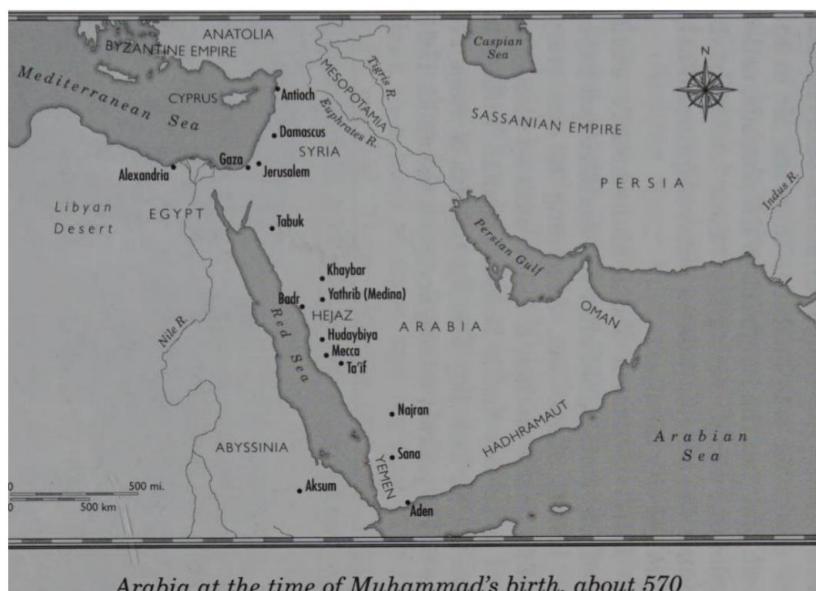
Thus, he reminded Sophia of her superior and noble lineage as a Jew, as they had the blood of thousands of prophets running in their veins and were considered to be the chosen people. The Muslim prophet could never tolerate anyone remotely disrespecting the Jewish race.

In order to grant superior status to Jewish women, the Koran told Muslim men that they are allowed to marry Jewish women. Thus, if the religion and its founder were as the misguided critics claim, then this would never have been allowed. But on the contrary, marriage and fraternisation has been endorsed by God and His Messenger in order to bring love and mercy and blood ties among Muslims and Jews.

Muhammad also encouraged his friends and relatives to learn trade from the Jews, and he himself engaged in business transactions with them, because he trusted the Jewish people with his life.

Once the Muslim Prophet Muhammad did not have enough food in his house, so he went to a Jew who had food and mortgaged his armour for the food. He purchased food grains from a Jew on credit and mortgaged his iron armour to him, and while greeting people, the Muslim prophet greeted Jews and Muslims together and insisted that Muslims should greet everyone without exception. Ibn Abbas, the renowned Muslim jurist told his peers: Return the greeting to whomever it is, Jew, Christian, or Magian. That is because God says in the Koran, 'When you are greeted with a greeting, greet with one better than it or return it.'

The Prophet Muhammad respected the Jewish people and recognized their due right and told his companion to work for them to pay back their debt in the shortest time possible. This showed that Muslims at the time freely interacted with the Jews and conferred them their due rights. They never treated others unjustly. This was the character of the Muslim Prophet Muhammad and those with him, but he is somehow accused of being anti Semite, and most Muslims are also accused of being anti-Jewish, although nothing could be farther from the truth.



Arabia at the time of Muhammad's birth, about 570

Some Jews at the time of Muhammad used to be very disrespectful in Medina, so whenever they used to see Muhammad, they used to greet him with the curse, 'death be upon you.' The wife of Muhammad, upon hearing this, got angry and responded by saying to them: Death and the curse of God be upon you! The Prophet then demanded her to be calm and then told her that God loves the one who is kind and lenient in all matters.

Another remarkable example of how much affection the Muslim prophet had for the Jews was when his friend Abdullah had slaughtered a sheep for his family and invited Muhammad, who had always stressed the importance of treating neighbours kindly and politely repeated asked Abdullah, "Have you given some to our neighbour, the Jew? Have you given some to our neighbour, the Jew?" The Muslim prophet became calm only after being assured that the Jewish neighbour was given a piece of the roasted meat.

The Muslim prophet Muhammad was always vigilant about the needs of his Jewish friends and neighbours, and has been reported to visit sick Jews in their homes. When a young Jew became ill in Medina, the Arab prophet went to visit him and sat down by his head and comforted the youth, and looked after his need.

On other occasions, some Jews were known to give free food to Muhammad because they had heard about the noble character of the Muslim Prophet and this suggests that had Muhammad been hostile to Jews, the Jewish people would not have given him anything for free.

Once, when Prophet Muhammad's grandsons, Hasan and Husain were crying due to hunger, their father Ali found a dinar and went to the market to purchase food from a Jew and get some flour. Ali came to the Jew and purchased flour with it. But the Jewish storekeeper said, "Are you the son-in-law of him who believes that he is the Messenger of God?" Ali said, "Yes." The Jew declared, "Have your dinar with you and you will get the flour." Ali then came to his wife Fatima and told her about the matter. She then kneaded the flour, put the utensil on fire and baked the bread. She sent for her father the Prophet and they all ate the food which was gifted by the Jew.

This showed that the Arabs and the family of Muhammad loved and respected everyone and although hatred was alien to his nature, modern day media had been successful in spreading false stories and rumours against the Muslims and their prophet. Those who accuse him of anti-Semitism are misinformed or propelled by their inherent hatred towards Muslims to propagate anything negative against him with a view to tarnishing his character or dismissing his religion.

For the past eighty years, the German nation had been false accused of carrying out a massive genocide, and most people in this world still believe that the German people had been responsible for massacring six million Jews, although the original number of dead Jews which were popularised in 1940 was 29 million. Modern historians somehow no longer consider the idea of 29 million Jews being killed in Europe to be feasible or realistic, so they settled for a smaller number of six million, although this amount had been contested numerous times.

The false evidences presented by historians on Banu Qurayza's treacherous warrior-men's fate shows that we do not have a clear picture of what had taken place. The warrior-men who committed treachery and participated in combat against the Muslims were forgiven by the Prophet Muhammad, but only nine people were sentenced to death in a Jewish court which was presided by a Jewish man named Saad, and the convicts who were guilty of rape and murder were executed by fellow Jews, without the presence or knowledge of Muhammad.

Even though some of those Jews had attacked Muslims, and waged war against the Arabs and armed other pagan enemies with weapons and provisions against the people of Medina, the Muslim prophet Muhammad still forgave them and allowed them to remain in their part of the town, and his beloved wife Sophia belonged to that Jewish tribe as well.

DID MUHAMMAD MARRY A SIX-YEAR-OLD GIRL? It seems to be a universal trait to accuse religious leaders and respectable clergies of indecent acts. Throughout human history, many religious figures were falsely accused of being deviants, and nearly all religious and pious leaders have some hopelessly false scandal associated to their names. Like the Church fathers who have been, for the past several decades, mercilessly persecuted by the courts for alleged indecencies and endlessly humiliated by the media for crimes they never committed, the founder of the Islamic religion appears to have shared the same fate as the Christian priest. In an uncanny resemblance to the false charges of child abuse and paedophilia that are levied against hundreds of priests each year, Muslim's prophet Muhammad was also accused of numerous misconducts, and until this day, slanders against his name continue to be propagated in millions of films, books, blogs, videos and even news clippings, and a large number of media influencers seem to be struck with a mania to propagate the false traditions which serves to portray this Arab orphan in a negative light. One of the main accusations that millions of people believe in and teach others is the age of Muhammad's second wife Aysha, who he married after the death of his first wife Khadeejah. A preposterous claim, that has in recent years gained surprising traction, is that Muhammad, the prophet of Islam, somehow married Aysha when she was only six or nine years of age. This idea of marrying a child was bizarre in seventh century Arabia, and even today, one wonders how this was so. Those who seek to smear Muhammad's character with false slanders hold on to this gossip and try to convince others that there is truth in this fictitious idea. However, in reality, Aysha, the woman who the Islamic prophet Muhammad was compelled to marry, was a nineteen-year-old woman at the time of marriage, but like all his subsequent marriages, Muhammad did not consummate this marriage, was never intimate with her or any other women, and remained celibate for the rest of his life, until his death at the age of sixty-three.

Some critics claim that Aysha could not have been nineteen at the time of her betrothal to Muhammad, because there is a dubious tradition found in some Islamic books which state that during the time of her marriage, Aysha was seen playing with dolls. Critics of Islam stipulate that if Aysha was playing with toys or dolls, she must have been a little girl of nine. However, the problem with the doll story is two-fold; one, Islamic laws prohibits Muslims from keeping or storing or even toying with items that has the shame or resemblance of an animate object or animal, meaning all forms of images or carvings of dolls are prohibited in a Muslim home, and hence, Aysha, or any other Muslim could not have played with a doll. The second issue with this narration is that it was fabricated by several Christian sources who were unaware that Islamic laws do not allow dolls to be present in Muslim households. In fact, due to the mere image of a little bird which was painted in the curtain of a home, the Muslim prophet refused to enter the dwelling until the imageries were concealed. However, it seems that whoever was trying to malign Muhammad's name with false accusations of paedophilia tried to bring up more elaborate false narrations such as fictional stories about Aysha playing with dolls. The basic idea of accusing chaste religious men with putrid crimes like child abuse was common in seventh century Arabia, as there were many celibate monks and priests in the Christian world, many of whom faced false accusations of paedophilia themselves, and it was likely from those sources that some Christians felt that they could succeed in branding the Muslim prophet as a sexual offender.

Catholic priests are not the only people who are accused of being sexual deviants. One other man who faced far greater insults is the Muslim prophet Muhammad, who was a simple desert Arab who lived in seventh century Arabia and attempted to eradicate illicit pagan customs and restore monotheism to the region. Muhammad is often accused of marrying his adopted son's wife, Zainap. But Muslim scholars explain that Muhammad never had a son, and his valet, who was only five years younger than himself, was the man who critics claim was his son. The valet was Zaid, a loyal aide and assistant who helped Muhammad write letters. It is the inhuman jealousy among men that causes them to target anyone who remains chaste and slander their names and ruin their reputation, and this is one of the reasons celibate and chaste Catholic priests are often the victims of this smear campaign. The innate jealousy of person who is incestuous or deviant and wants to be proud of his illicit actions, causes him or her to lash out at anyone who does not practice similar deviant behaviour, and this has caused religious men everywhere to suffer from false accusations. What has been going on against Muhammad is now being levied against the priests, who are also chaste and pious. The critics accuse Muhammad of being a womaniser, and molester, and try to bring up Muhammad's marriage to Zainap, who was his second cousin. Zainap was hopelessly in love with Muhammad since her childhood, but Muhammad refused her marriage proposals numerous times, and even asked his valet Zaid to marry her. The woman tried to commit suicide out of hopelessness and repeatedly tried to take her own life and when she became insane to marry Muhammad, he finally relented, and agreed to wed her only in name. There are numerous authentic traditions that prove that Muhammad never consummated any of his marriage save the first one to Khadeejah, and his subsequent wives reported that they never saw Muhammad's body, and neither did he ever see their body, even though in pagan Arabia, it was a norm for wealthy men to have fifty to five hundred wives. However, the slander against Muhammad's name increased in recent years, and people sometimes even claim Muhammad married a nine-year-old, when the woman was Aysha, a nineteen-year-old woman whose aunts tricked Muhammad into accepting her as a wife. Aysha was eager to live in Muhammad's home, even though her mother was vehemently against this union, and feared that Aysha's violent manners would likely hurt a simple man like Muhammad. Even within the Islamic religion, Aysha became a problematic figure, with some Muslims branding her as a heretic who purposefully lied about their prophet. Until today, many Shiite Muslims believe Aysha attempted to assassinate Muhammad by poisoning him, but there is no evidence to suggest that she was a vicious person, even though she had led a rebel army into war against Muhammad's cousin, causing tens of thousands of Muslims to die.

Dating from the migration, the power of Muhammad steadily grew until in the eighth year, Muhammad entered Mecca after practically a bloodless victory and established it as the spiritual centre of his faith. Planting his standard to the north of Mecca, he rode into the city, and after circling seven times the sacred temple of Abraham, ordered the 360 idols and images within its precincts to be hewn down. He then entered the Ka'ba itself, cleansed it of its idolatrous associations, and rededicated the structure to Allah, the monotheistic God of Islam. Muhammad next granted amnesty to all his enemies for their attempts to destroy him. Under his protection Mecca increased in power and glory, becoming the focal point of a great annual pilgrimage, which even to this day winds across the desert in the months of pilgrimage and numbers over millions. In the tenth year after the Hegira, Muhammad led the valedictory pilgrimage and for the last time rode at the head of the faithful along the sacred way leading to Mecca and the Black Stone. As the premonition of death was strong upon him, he desired this pilgrimage to be the perfect model for all the thousands that would follow.

The prominent writer, Washington Irving writes, "Conscious that life was waning away within him, Muhammad, during this last sojourn in the sacred city of his faith, sought to engrave his doctrines deeply in the minds and hearts of his followers. For this purpose, he preached frequently in the Ka'ba from the pulpit, or in the open air from the back of his camel. Listen to my words, would he say, 'for I know not whether, after this year, we shall ever meet here again. Oh, my hearers, I am but a man like yourselves; the angel of death may at any time appear, and I must obey his summons.'"

While thus preaching, the very heavens are said to have opened and the voice of God spoke, saying: "This day I have perfected your religion, and accomplished in you my grace." When these words were uttered, the multitude fell down in adoration and even Muhammad camel knelt. Having completed the valedictory pilgrimage, Muhammad returned to Medina.

In the seventh year after the Hegira, an attempt was made at Khaybar to poison the Muslim Prophet Muhammad. As Muhammad took the first mouthful of the poisoned food, the evil design was revealed to him either by the taste of the meat or, as the faithful Muslims believe, by divine intercession. He had already swallowed a small portion of the food, however, and for the remainder of his life he suffered almost constantly from the effects of the poison. In A.H. 11, when his final illness came upon him, Muhammad insisted that the subtle effects of the poison were the indirect cause of his approaching end. It is related that during his last sickness he rose one night and visited a burial ground on the outskirts of Medina, evidently believing that he, too, would soon be numbered with the dead. At this time, he told an attendant that the choice had been offered him of continuing his physical life or going to his Lord, and that he had chosen to meet his Maker.

For many days and weeks, Muhammad suffered greatly with his head and side and also from fever, but on June 8th seemed convalescent. He joined his followers in prayer and, seating himself in the courtyard, delivered a lecture to the faithful in a clear and powerful voice. Apparently, he overtaxed his strength, for it was necessary to assist him into his house, which opened into the court of the mosque. Here, upon a tough pallet laid on the bare floor the prophet of Islam and spent his last two hours on earth. Feeling that death was upon him, Muhammad prayed: "O Lord, I beseech Thee, assist me in the agonies of death."

In *The Hero as Prophet*, Thomas Carlyle writes thus of the death of Muhammad, "His last words were a prayer, broken ejaculations of a heart struggling-up in trembling hope towards its Maker."

Muhammad was buried under the floor of the apartment in which he died. The present condition of the grave is thus described: "Above the room is a green dome, surmounted by a large gilt crescent, springing from a series of globes. Within the building are the tombs of Muhammad, Abu Bakr, and Omar, with a space reserved for the grave of our Lord Jesus Christ, who Muslims say will again visit the earth, and die and be buried at al-Madinah. The grave of Fatimah, the Prophet's daughter, is supposed to be in a separate part of the building, although some say she was buried in Baqi."

Concerning the character of Muhammad, there have been the grossest misconceptions both in written work and videos. No evidence exists to support the charges of extreme cruelty and licentiousness laid at his door. On the other hand, the more closely the life of Muhammad is scrutinized by dispassionate investigators, the more apparent become the finer qualities of his nature.

In the words of Carlyle: "Muhammad himself, after all that can be said about him, was not a sensual man. We so err widely if we consider this man as a common voluptuary, intent mainly on base enjoyments - nay, on enjoyments of any kind. His household was of the frugalest, his common diet barley bread and water. Sometimes for months there was not a fire once lighted on his hearth. A poor, hard-working, ill-provided man; careless of what vulgar man toiled for. They called him a Prophet, you say? Why, he stood there, face to face with them; there, not enshrined in any mystery, visibly clouting his own cloak, cobbling his own shoes, fighting, counselling, ordering in the midst of them, they must have seen what kind of a man he was, let him be called what you like! No emperor with his tiaras was obeyed as this man in a cloak of his own clouting."

Confused by the apparently hopeless task of reconciling the life of the Prophet with the absurd statements long accepted as authentic, Washington Irving weighs Muhammad in the scales of fairness and states: "His military triumphs awakened no pride nor vainglory, as they would have done had they been effected for selfish purposes. In the time of his greatest power, he maintained the same simplicity of manners and appearances as in the days of his

adversity. It is this perfect abnegation of self, connected with this apparent heartfelt piety, running throughout the various phases of his fortune, which perplex one in forming a just estimate of Muhammad's character. When he hung over the death-bed of his infant son Ibrahim, resignation to the will of God was exhibited in his conduct under this keenest of afflictions; and the hope of soon rejoining his child in Paradise was his consolation." (See Muhammad and His Successors.)

Aysha, questioned after the death of Muhammad concerning his habits, replied that he mended his own clothes, cobbled his own shoes, and helped her in the household duties. Muslim writers highlight that how far removed from Western concepts of Muhammad's sanguinary character was Aysha's simple admission that he loved most of all to sew! He also accepted the invitations of slaves and sat at meals with servants, declaring himself to be a servant.

Of all vices, Muhammad hated lying the most. Before his death, he freed all his slaves. He never permitted his family to use for personal ends any of the alms or tithe money given by his people. He was fond of sweetmeats and used rain water for drinking purposes. His time he divided into three parts, namely: the first he gave to God, the second to his family, and the third to himself. The latter portion, however, he later sacrificed to the service of his people. He dressed chiefly in white but also wore red, yellow, and green. Mohammed entered Mecca wearing a black turban and bearing a black standard. He wore only the plainest of garments, declaring that rich and conspicuous raiment did not become the pious, and did not remove his shoes at prayer. He was particularly concerned with the cleanliness of his teeth and at the time of his death, when too weak to speak, indicated his desire for a toothpick. When fearful of forgetting something, the Prophet tied a thread to his ring. He once had a very fine gold ring but, noting that his followers had taken to wearing similar rings in emulation of him, he removed his own and threw it away lest his followers form an evil habit. (See The Life of Mohammad)

The popular conception that Muhammad taught that woman had no soul and could attain heaven only through marriage is not substantiated by the words and attitude of Muhammad during his lifetime. In a paper entitled, The Influence of Islam on Social Conditions, read at the World's Parliament of Religions held in Chicago, in 1893, Alexander Russell Webb states the charge and answers it thus: "It has been said that Muhammad and the Koran denied a soul to woman and ranked her with the animals. The Koran places her on a perfect and complete equality with man, and the Prophet's teachings often place her in a position superior to the male in some respects."

Mr. Webb justifies his stand by quoting from the thirty-fifth verse of the thirty-third sura of the Koran. "Verily the Muslims of either sex, and the true believers of either sex, and the devout men, and the devout women, and the men of veracity, and the women of veracity, and the patient men, and the patient women, and the humble men, and the humble women, and the alms-givers of either sex, and the men who fast, and the women who fast, and the chaste men, and the chaste women, and those of either sex who remember Allah frequently: for them hath Allah prepared forgiveness and a great reward."

Here the attainment of heaven is clearly set forth as a problem whose only solution is that of individual merit. On the day of his death Muhammad told Fatima, his beloved daughter, and Safiya, his aunt: "Work ye out that which shall gain acceptance for you with the Lord."

"The Mussulmans," writes Sir William Jones, "are already a sort of heterodox Christians: they are Christians, if Locke reasons justly, because they firmly believe the immaculate conception, divine character, and miracles of the MESSIAH; but they are heterodox, in denying vehemently his character of Son, and his equality, as God, with the Father, of whose unity and attributes they entertain and express the most awful ideas, while they consider our doctrine as perfect blasphemy, and insist that our copies of the Scriptures have been corrupted both by Jews and Christians."

The following lines are declared by the followers of the Prophet to have been deleted from the Christian Gospels: "And when Jesus, the Son of Mary, said, O children of Israel, verily I am the apostle of God sent unto you, confirming the law which was delivered before me, and bringing good tidings of an apostle who shall come after me, and whose name shall be AHMED." In the present text containing the prophecy of Jesus concerning a comforter to come after Him, it is further claimed that the word comforter should be translated 'illustrious' and that it had a direct reference to Muhammad; also that the tongues of flame that descended upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost in no way could be interpreted as signifying the promised comforter. When asked, however, for definite proof that the original Gospels contained these so-called expurgated references to Muhammad, the Muslims make a counter-demand for production of the original documents upon which Christianity is founded. Until such writings are discovered, the point under dispute must remain a source of controversy.

During his lifetime, Muhammad revered the Ka'ba, a cube-shaped building in the midst of the great court of the mosque at Mecca, is the most holy spot in the Islamic world. Toward it the followers of Muhammad must face five times a day at the appointed hours of prayer. Like the devotees of nearly all other faiths, the Muslims originally faced the East while in prayer, but by a later decree he was ordered to turn his face toward Mecca. Before it became a Mohammedan mosque, the Ka'ba was a pagan temple. At the time the Prophet captured Mecca, the Ka'ba and surrounding court contained 360 idols, which were destroyed by Muhammad before he actually gained access to the shrine itself. The 'Ancient House,' as the Ka'ba is called, is an irregular cube with the length of each side wall varying slightly. In the southeast corner of the wall, at a convenient distance above the ground is embedded the sacred and mysterious black stone or aerolite of Abraham. When first given to that patriarch by the Angel Gabriel, this stone was of such strong whiteness as to be visible from every part of the earth, but late, it became black because of the sins of man. This black stone, oval in shape and about seven inches in diameter, was broken in the seventh century and is now held together by a silver mounting.

According to traditions, 2,000 years before the creation of the world the Ka'ba was first constructed in heaven, where a model of it still remains. Adam erected the Ka'ba on earth exactly below the spot in heaven occupied by the original, and selected the stones from the five sacred mountains: Sinai, al-Jadi, Hiri, Olivet, and Lebanon. Ten thousand angels were appointed to guard the structure. At the time of the Flood, the sacred house was destroyed, but afterward was rebuilt by Abraham and his son.

Like the temple at Jerusalem, the Ka'ba has undergone many vicissitudes, and the present structure does not antedate the seventeenth century of the Christian Era. When Mecca was sacked in A.D. 930, the famous black stone was captured by the Carpathians, in whose possession it remained over twenty years and it is a moot question whether the stone finally returned by them in exchange for a princely ransom was actually the original block or a substitute. The side of the Ka'ba are the supposed graves of Hagar and Ishmael, and near the door is the stone upon which Abraham stood while rebuilding the Ka'ba. Various coverings have always been thrown over the cube-shaped structure, the present drape, which is replaced annually, is a black brocade embroidered in a gold. Small pieces of the old drape are cherished by pilgrims as holy relics. The interior is lined with varicoloured marble, silver, and gold.

Opening into the courtyard are nineteen gates, the sacred and significant number of the Metonic Cycle and also the number of stones in the inner ring of Stonehenge. Seven great minarets tower above the Ka'ba, and one of the sacred ceremonials in connection with the building includes seven circumambulations about the central Ka'ba in an apparent effort to portray the motion of the celestial bodies.

To ignore the heritage of culture received from Islam would be an unpardonable oversight, for when the crescent triumphed over the cross in Southern Europe it was the harbinger of a civilization which had no equal in its day.

Stanley Lane-Poole writes: "For nearly eight centuries under her Mohammedan rulers, Spain set to all Europe a shining example of a civilized and enlightened state. Art, literature and science prospered as they then prospered nowhere else in Europe. Students flocked from France and Germany and England to drink from the fountains of learning which flowed only in the cities of the Moors. The surgeons and doctors of Andalusia were in the van of science: women were encouraged to devote themselves to serious study, and a lady doctor was not unknown among the people of Cordova. Mathematics, astronomy and botany, history, philosophy and jurisprudence, were to be mastered in Spain and in Spain alone."

The Library of Original Sources thus sums up the effects of Islam: "The results of Mohammedism have been greatly underestimated. In the century after Muhammad's death, it wrested Asia Minor, Africa, and Spain from Christianity, more than half of the civilized world, and established a civilization, the highest in the world during the Dark Ages. It brought the Arabian race to their highest development, raised the position of women in the East, though it retained polygamy, was intensively monotheistic, and until the Turks gained control for the most part encouraged progress."

In the same work, among the great Islamic scientists and philosophers who have made substantial contributions to human knowledge are listed Gerber, or Djafer, who in the ninth century laid the foundations for modern chemistry; Ben Musa, who in the tenth century introduced the theory of algebra; Alhaze, who in the eleventh century made a profound study of optics and discovered the magnifying power of convex lenses; and in the eleventh century also, both Avicenna, or Ibn Sina, whose medical encyclopaedia was the standard of his age, and the great Qubbalist Avicebron, or Ibn Gebirol.

"Looking back upon the science of the Mohammedans," resumes the authority just quoted, "it will be seen that they laid the first foundations of chemistry, and made important advances in mathematics and optics. Their discoveries never had the influence they should have had upon the course of European civilization, but this was because Europe itself was not enlightened enough to grasp and make use of them. Gerber's observation that oxidized iron weighs heavier than before oxidation had to be made over again. So had some of their work in optics, and many of their geographical discoveries. They had rounded Africa long before Vasco da Gama. The composition of gunpowder came into Northern Europe from them. We must never forget that the dark ages in Christian Europe were the bright ones of the Mohammedan world. In the field of philosophy, the Arabs started by adopting the Neo-Platonism they found in Europe, and gradually working back to Aristotle."

I knew a young priest who was falsely accused of molesting a teenager. For five years since being accused, he lived the life of destitute. He publicly suspended, and banned from ever wearing a priest's robe. However, investigations later proved that the accuser had no credibility but the priest was not allowed back. He was pressured to request laicization even after being proved innocent, parishioners shrink away upon seeing him. The bashful priest was forced to undergo this injustice alone, with even his family refusing to speak to him again. One false accusation had ruined his life and reputation. Somehow, the Church was more interested in defending itself and swiftly distanced itself from accused priests, even the obviously innocent ones.

For the adherents of Islam, Muhammad is a prophet who manifested the ideal life and lived in purity, humility, charity and chastity but like many Christian priests, he too faced heinous charges. From the age of twenty-five, Muhammad remained married faithfully to his much older wife Khadeejah, a woman who had been previously married with several children. It is a well-known fact that Muhammad had never been intimate with any of his wives after the death of Khadeejah, and the weddings that took place in the years preceding his death were acts of charity to help aging widows and critically ill women and old grandmothers who had no one to care for them. As an act of gallant charity, the Muslim's prophet Muhammad agreed to make some of the poor and helpless widows, who no one else wished to wed due to their extreme old age and unattractive prospect, his wife. However, as can be corroborated from various prophetic traditions, and direct quotes from his wives, as reported from authentic prophetic traditions, such as Aysha who said, never in his life did the prophet look on the private parts of his wives and nor did they ever see his private parts. It was Muhammad's extreme chaste nature and utter modesty that kept him away from women, and allowed him to dedicate his days in meditation and fasting, and his nights in prayer. In other authentic traditions, Muhammad's companions would say he was more shy than a virgin girl within a veil in her separate room.

How did the tradition of Aysha's age become so popular? This was primarily due to a misleading quote that was narrated by an old man in Iraq, who was by profession a story-teller and was believed to have become senile due to old age. He likely told listeners that Muhammad's wife Aysha was nine years old due to an Arabic dialectical misunderstanding, which drops the 'teen' in numbers up to twenty, so do denote a youth of fifteen, they would merely say he or she is five. In Aisha's case, the storyteller was likely alluding to the fact that Aysha was sixteen or possibly nineteen at the time of betrothal.

Within the Muslim sects, Aysha had been a problematic figure, and therefore, traditions narrated by her are often deemed untrustworthy. Clerics of Shite Islam consider Aisha to be a sinful woman who had allegedly poisoned the prophet and killed him. Sunni Muslims do not outrightly claim that Aysha was sinful, but they do acknowledge she made honest mistakes in her life, and eventually repented. Other Shite Muslim traditions believe Aysha was an adulteress who had a child prior to her betrothal with Muhammad. Sunni Islam do not agree that Aysha was an adulteress, but they do acknowledge that she was the mother of a child named Abdullah, many years before her marriage to Muhammad. However, there are two versions of the story, with one group of Sunni insisting that Aysha was never married before, therefore the child was adopted, and other more reliable sources state that Aisha may have been married prior to her connection with the Muslim prophet.

Other narrations purportedly narrated by Aysha offers explicit details about her marital life, but there is little evidence to corroborate those traditions. For example, the Muslim prophet himself was never quoted as saying that Aisha was six or nine-years-old.

Until today, the main issue that separates Shite and Sunni schools of thought are the traditions related to Aysha. Even centuries after the death of Islam's prophet, many devout Shite go to Aysha's tomb to curse her soul and even

desecrate her grave, because they believe she had murdered the prophet by poisoning him. Such a furore often takes place near Aysha's tomb, that for many years, the Saudi Arabian authorities banned Shite Muslims from coming near the holy cemeteries. The Shite Muslims feel they are justified in their hate because they cite authentic traditions that hint that Aysha may have force-fed Muhammad some potions hours before his death, where Aysha admits, (as reported in the Bukhari-approved traditions) that she 'put medicine in one side of his mouth but he started waving us not to insert the medicine into his mouth...But when he came to his senses he said, 'Did I not forbid you to put medicine by force in the side of my mouth?' Sunni Muslims insist that Aysha was merely trying to give Muhammad some medicine to cure his illness, but it was these narrations that alienated these two branches of Islam into diverging ends. Until today, Sunnis and Shite Muslims continued to disagree over the status of Aysha, and some Shite clerics believe that Aysha deliberately told people she was six-years-old at the time of her marriage to Muhammad in order to convince her students that she was very young and single, and could not have been married with a child, but it is a common historical fact that Aysha was the mother of a little boy, and was popularly known as the 'mother of Abdulla.'

Shite Muslims condemn Aysha most severely for narrating such indecent and insulting traditions about their prophet, but Sunni Muslims believe that the young woman was genuinely confused at times and did not mean to intentionally harm the reputation of the prophet with those unvaried stories. Most Shite Muslims, however, still curse Aysha and disregard all the prophetic traditions that she had ever narrated. They consider every word uttered by her to be false and mischievous, while Sunni Muslims accept every tradition narrated by even the most ordinary people in Muhammad's life. Shite Muslims blame Aysha for trying to ruin the unblemished reputation of their prophet, and they feel that she is an unqualified legal adviser or scholar particularly because Aysha was involved in waging a war against other Muslims of her time. In 656, Aysha mounted on a camel and led a rebel army against the fourth Islamic leader Ali, causing much bloodshed. Nearly twenty-thousand men were killed in the battle, and Aysha's rebels were defeated. Since she was instrumental in the deaths of so many Muslim men, some Shite Muslims believe she may not have been a devout follower of Islam, and therefore, they reject any narration which had been transmitted from Aysha.

The Muslim jurist Tabari reported that, in the 5th year of Muhammad's Prophet-Hood, around 615, Abu Bakr, who was the father of Aysha, prepared to migrate to Ethiopia with a group of persecuted Muslims seeking asylum to the righteous Christian king who ruled there. Before embarking on his journey, Abu Bakr went to Mutam, with whose son Aysha was betrothed to. Abu Bakr told Mutam that his daughter was an adult woman who should live in her husband's home, and asked the man to take Aysha into his household as his son's wife, in an official ceremony, so that Abu Bakr would have one less daughter to worry about prior to this long journey. Although Mutam had married his son to Aysha several years ago, he now refused to conduct an official ceremony and take Aysha into his house, presumably because Abu Bakr had embraced Islam. Soon, his son also broke off the marriage contract with Aysha. This report shows clearly that Aysha was much older than nine years in 615. This also suggests that her age in the year 624 was also much more than eight or nine. During his lifetime, Muhammad's enemies spread false narration about Aysha being nine or six years old, but Muhammad himself was never quoted as stating anything like this. It is from those unreliable sources that many people hear about Muhammad marrying a young girl of nine, when in essence, his wife was nineteen at the time of betrothal. Although Muhammad had no reported scandals in his youth, and at the age of 25, rather than marrying a young woman, he married an elderly widow named Khadeejah. It was obvious that he did not marry her for sexual gratification but for love and mutual respect. However, like all pious and chaste men, of all the accusations laid against Muhammad, his critics love to accuse him of paedophilia. Like the thousands of Catholic priests who are falsely accused of abusing children, Muhammad's critic calls him a child molester because he allegedly married a young girl. This accusation is made to de-legitimize the authority of the Muslim's prophet as a moral and spiritual guide. Those who prefer to slander ignore the Arab historians who say Aysha was nineteen years old at the time of betrothal with Muhammad, because she was ten years younger than her older sister Asma, who was 28 years at that time, but they say that Muhammad never consummated any of his marriage beside the first marriage with an old woman.

REFUTING SLAVERY CLAIMS OF MUHAMMAD:

DID MUHAMMAD MARRY A SLAVE GIRL? The Muslim prophet Muhammad is one man who have likely faced more false cases both in his lifetime, and continue to be slandered today. Despite living a life of purity, charity and chastity, Muhammad had been accused of child molestation, primarily due to the fabricated narrations which many people have transmitted, falsely attributing bizarre quotations to Muhammad. Some Muslims believe that the huge number of false traditions and quotations from Muhammad and his companions are due to the efforts of some Levant Christian who secured positions of leadership in the Arab world. Many genuinely disliked Muhammad and wanted the Arabs of Hejaz to stop following his practices. It is possible that a handful of those Christian Syrians thinking that Muhammad was false prophet, spread some slander in his name. It has to be noted as well that nearly half of the Syrians from Levant who took up leadership positions in the Muslim world had appeared to have converted to Islam, but those fake Muslims were very successful in teaching Muslims that their prophet Muhammad was a womaniser or even a paedophile. Those vindictive leaders tried to destroy every authentic narration of Muhammad, and for seventy years, they burned every last copy of the prophetic narrations, including all historical information that was known to people of that era.

The non-Muslim men who swarmed inside the Islamic cities like mecca and Medina were also responsible for trying to assassinate Umm Habiba, the dear friend of the prophet. For forty days, they surrounded the house of the prophet's son-in-law, Osman, and blocked all water and food from entering his house, and in that terrible siege, they continued to pretend to be believers in Islam but stormed inside the home and executed the eighty-year-old man by hacking him to death. Of course, like the modern-day terror groups which claim to be Muslims, although acting completely contradictory to Islamic teachings, those assassins brandished Muslim names and worse Arabic clothes and killed anyone who tried to refute these false allegations against the prophet. Those men also destroyed every copy of the Koran they found, but the only reason the Muslim holy Scripture survived the purge was primarily due to the memorization of the book by thousands of men, women and children. This team of fake Muslim leaders also assassinated every Muslim jurist, scholar and philosopher, and they killed over forty-thousand Muslim men, including all the family members of Muhammad, and even his grandsons. They had sought to obliterate Islam from the pages of history and vandalized the Muslim holy mosques in Mecca and Medina. For one year, these leaders did not allow Muslims to pray in the temple of Abraham in Mecca, and they razed every religious house to the ground. It is interesting to note that while this bloodthirsty group of converted Syrians were pillaging Islamic holy cities, they were insisting they are Muslims, even though they slaughtered tens of thousands of men and women each day, and actively distributed false narrations into Muslim textbooks. Over 300,000 fake hadith, or prophetic narrations have found its way into the Muslim books of jurisprudence, and most remain in existence until today. One of the false narrations that made its way to modern times was the case of Muhammad allegedly marrying a little girl of nine, and scholars believe that it was one of the many smear campaigns against the Muslim prophet that made the group narrate this false tradition. The woman, Aysha, was indeed betrothed to Muhammad, but she was an adult woman of nine-teen, who even had a child from her previous marriage. Like the false paedophilia cases that are flung vigorously against our priests these days, Muhammad also became a victim of this cruel fate, when the small group of Syrian leaders decided to mix lies with the truthful narrations, in order to make Muhammad appear like a vile man. It is not unusual for people to become envious of religious men, and they targeted the Christian priests the same way they targeted the Muslim prophet. Muhammad inadvertently became the greatest victim of this slander, because most Muslim also believe in those lies. Some knowledgeable scholars of Islamic jurisprudence have tried to debunk those false narrations, such as providing historical evidence of Aysha's real age, by extracting only the authentic narrations, but others fought back and brought up more fake allegations against Muhammad. One of the main people who was responsible for accusing Muhammad of many outlandish crimes is known as Bukhari. Bukharin or Bukhari as he became known, was a man from the Uzbekistani region, born in 810, but although he claimed to be a Muslim, many believe he may have been an orthodox Christian, or even adherent of the Mongol religions. Many Muslims believe that Bukhari lied about the Muslim prophet in his book and wrote that Muhammad had a child bride, or was a molester, and even had a concubine. Some people thought that Bukhari was making these historical errors because he did no genuinely understand Arabic, as he was a foreigner from Uzbekistan. However, Muhammad was known to have been unusually chaste and celibate, and his wives declared that he never had been intimate with any of them, so this caused for other Muslim scholars to conduct their own study. One such authentic jurist was a man from Medina. He became known as Imam Malik, and for the entirety of his life, he tried to unearth the false slanders which stained Muhammad's life. As a native of Medina, the Muslim prophet's city, Malik was accepted by the Arabs as an honest man, because he only narrated those traditions which he had directly heard from the old people who were alive during the prophet's time, and his collection of prophetic traditions are considered the most authentic ones in the world. Imam Malik clarified that Aysha was not actually nine years old, but a nineteen-year-old woman at the time of her betrothal to Muhammad, and that too was never consummated, as he never had

any children from Aysha or any of his wives. Malik also pointed out the hypocrisy of many of Muhammad's critics who claim that he allegedly had a concubine slave girl which was gifted to him by an Egyptian king.

Maria and her sister Shireen were slave-girls belonging to the governor of Alexandria, who was generally known as the Caucasian, as mentioned in Islamic history. But in history books, this leader is believed to be the prominent seventh century figure, Cyrus of Alexandria. In 620, he assumed the position of Bishop of Phasis in Colchis. Cyrus, who was once patriarch, made persistent efforts to reconcile the Christians, and he even attended synods in Cyprus, and for over ten years, Cyrus harshly persecuted the Egyptians, trying to convert them into his version of Christianity, but the majority of the people did not recognize him as their Pope. Instead, the Egyptians acknowledged Pope Benjamin I, and Cyrus had spared no effort to capture him. Eventually, Cyrus's troops captured Pope Benjamin's brother and subjected him to the most brutal torture imaginable. But the Pope's brother remained steadfast with Christian patience, refusing to renounce his faith even when his body was burned and his teeth pulled out. He was killed.

On another occasion, Cyrus brought an Egyptian Archbishop in chains and ordered the soldiers to beat him mercilessly and tried to coerce him to believe in him, but the Archbishop said, "It is better to obey God and His holy Archbishop Benjamin than to obey you and your devilish doctrine, O son of Satan, Antichrist, Beguiler." Cyrus commanded the soldiers to strike him dead. Cyrus put all Coptic priests to death. Cyrus appointed Chalcedonian bishops to govern every Egyptian city but the Coptic people continued to hold secret gatherings, while some Copts made attempts on Cyrus's life, but the conspirators were summarily executed without trial. Among his many vices, Cyrus kept many beautiful Copt women enslaved in his palace, and often, those women would be oppressed and violated.

When the Islamic prophet Muhammad invited Cyrus to believe in God, the prefect of Egypt sent two of his pregnant female slaves as gift with specific instruction to the envoys that those girls must be given to Muhammad only. Cyrus was an ambitious man who wanted to be the head of all Christian churches and he also hoped that the child of his personal slave girl would be considered to be Muhammad's offspring, so that in the future, he could have power over the Arabs. Eventually, several decades after Muhammad's death, the people of Egypt could not tolerate the oppression of Cyrus, and hoped that they could be ruled by some other party who will be just, so when the Muslims entered Egypt under the leadership of Amr, Egyptians flocked to him and welcomed the Muslim army into their cities, causing Cyrus to surrender and flee.

The envoys obeyed these instructions, and delivered the pregnant girls to Muhammad's house. However, everyone in Arabia already saw that two heavily pregnant women were brought to Muhammad's house, and soon, a scandal broke out, as people began to whisper that those slave-girls belonging to Cyrus of Alexandria were unchaste harlots, who conceived children out of wedlock. When Muhammad learnt that the two sisters had been assaulted by their previous owners, and were pregnant, he defended her honour and claimed the fatherhood of the child which was born only a few months later. Although slavery was not permitted in the Islamic religion, Muhammad allowed the women to remain under his protection until their child was born, because marriage to a woman who was impregnated by another man is not permitted in Islam.

Upon hearing the harrowing circumstance of their lives, and seeking to protect them from further disgrace, Muhammad gallantly sheltered the visibly pregnant young women in his house and even asked his friend Hassan bin Thabit, to marry the older sister Shireen.

These brief anecdotes serve as poignant reminder that there are two sides of every story, and it is easy to become blinded by hatred and lash out at a particular person or community.

Although Muhammad never had intimate relations with any other than his first wife, hundreds of slanders are flung at his character each day. He is branded by many as a murderer, even though he never killed anyone in his entire life. There had been so much slander and misquoted and false traditions in his name within the first 70 years after his death, that by the time real Muslims came into power, most of Muhammad's friends and family members were dead. His companions were old and dying, and when they tried to recover some of the authentic traditions, it was already too late, and the truth became mixed with the false ones, while many of the traditions that exist today are true, most have been fabricated to some extent. It is for this reason that Muslims stubbornly adhere to their holy book, Koran, because it has never been altered or changed.

The incident with Maria the Copt caused many sincere Muslim to question the paternity of the child, because they knew the woman was heavily pregnant before arriving to Medina. And they were doubly shocked to see Muhammad accepting the child as his own, and even naming the boy Abraham. Soon, there was a gossip that Maria the Copt was an adulteress who had become pregnant prior to meeting Muhammad, but their prophet only married her to save her honour.

Thereafter, several verses of the Muslim Koran assured the people that women like Maria, who have likely been violated and were forcibly impregnated, have no fault of their own, and should be considered chaste women. And believers must not accuse them of indecency, for slandering against women is a grave sin. In the Chapter called The Light, God declared that a harsh penalty awaits those who level accusations against innocent victims without supporting these allegations with the testimony of four eyewitnesses. They must be ostracized in their communities and are not allowed to give testimony in court for spreading such lies and rumours.

These directives were recited and Muslims came to understand that Maria the Copt was indeed a chaste woman who had been a victim of slavery and abuse. The case was closed at that time, but many years later, some people began to associate the story of Maria the Copt with the slanders Muhammad's wife Aysha faced in her youth, and the existence of Aysha in Islamic exegesis caused Muslims to split into two opposing groups: Sunni and Shite Muslims.

Shite Muslims believe that Aysha is an untrustworthy source of Islamic traditions because she may have had inappropriate relationship with her cousin, or her previous fiancé. They also believe there was some misconduct between Aysha and another handsome soldier named Safwan. Sunni Muslims however insist that Aysha was not an adulteress. Just as these bashful priests are not spared from false and horrifying accusations, the Muslim's prophet Muhammad had faced a strong wave of criticism in recent years. Critics of Muhammad claim Aysha was probably a little girl when he wed her, quotes Aysha as she stated, "I was a girl playing games." The Arabic word she used to describe herself was 'jariya', a term used to describe older girls who had passed into puberty, and she is considered a bridal candidate that can marry. Arab linguists are unanimous that no one under the age of thirteen is ever described as 'jariya' meaning Aysha could not have been nine-years-old. The age difference of Aisha's siblings should also be taken into account. As is known, Abu Bakr had six children. Asma and Abdullah were born from Quitalla, daughter of Mays, and Aisha and Abdurrahman from Umm Rumman. Abu Bakr's first daughter, Asma, was born in the year 595, roughly 27 years before Muhammad's emigration to Medina. She died in the 73rd year of the Hijra at the age of 100. Here there is another critical piece of historical information. The age difference between Aisha and her sister Asma was 10 years, so according to this, Aysha's year of birth was 605 ($595+10=605$) and her age at the time of the Hijra was likely 17 ($27-10=17$). Since her alleged marriage took place around eight months after the Hijra, this means Aysha was 17 or 18 years old at that time, not nine-years-old as many people erroneously claim.

It is unfortunate that these bashful men who never even dreamed of committing a sexual act should be accused of so many forms of heinous crimes, especially when they already live a life of abstinence and poverty, with very little money to spend on personal expenses. Some priests receive less than fifty American dollars per week to buy necessary hygiene products like toothbrush or aftershave. All they sought from life was to serve other people, and these priests faithfully helped every Christian family they came across, but like all religious men who choose to live a pure and chaste life, they face slander and endless assault on their character. Like the Christian priests who face false accusations, the Muslim's prophet Muhammad was ridiculed during his lifetime, and until this day, nearly fifteen hundred years since he passed away, innumerable slanders and blasphemies are thrown at him, a Bedouin Arab man who had lived a life of charity, poverty and chastity. According to Islamic traditions, Muhammad refused to hoard wealth and encouraged others to give their money to those who were more needy, and for months on end, he would have no food in his home. Abu Talha, one of Muhammad's neighbours, narrated that when Muslims were struggling with poverty, they once complained to him about hunger and also showed him the single stone which they had tied to their stomachs. Muhammad's face paled upon seeing the anguish of his friends, but when he lifted his tunic, the people saw that there were two stones tied to his stomach due to much more severe pangs of hunger. Although he had not seen any food for an entire month, the Arab orphan did not complain to his neighbours, and as he stood with his companions in perseverance and steadfastness, never did he ask them for help. Those stones were tied on the stomach because of extreme weakness and hunger, but rather than complaining about the trials he faced, Muhammad himself chose this way of life. He was content with living in poverty, and giving his every last coin to the poor. Muslims believe that Muhammad chose to live in austerity to be in solidarity with ordinary people, and he would give all his income into charity, and observed a chaste and celibate life like the Catholic priests who serve their parishes with patience and steadfastness. During the final years of his life, Muhammad took pity on several

poor and elderly widows and married them in name only to look after their many children, but never did he consummate any of those marriages. However, many people, even today, accuse Muhammad of being a womaniser, when he had been given many opportunities to marry rich and beautiful women in Mecca, but he turned them down, because of his celibacy ad chastity. When he was fifty years old, the pagans of Mecca offered Muhammad unlimited gold and silver, in addition to power and leadership, and finally they presented to him the most charming damsels, and offered him marriage to their most beautiful women only if he would stop preaching about freeing the slaves, granting women their rights and establish the equality of all, but Muhammad refused all their offerings and continued to live a life of prayers and meditation. Despite his ascetic lifestyle, Muhammad was mercilessly beaten and cursed, and pagans spread false rumours against him. Like all shy and chaste men, the Muslim's prophet Muhammad was slandered with fabricated charges. Just as many people continued to falsely accuse our Catholic priests with fake assault and abuse cases, Muhammad became a victim of this witch-hunt for mostly the same reasons. He too is accused of being a child molester due to his marriage to a nineteen-year-old woman. Critics claim that the woman was nine-years-old at the time of betrothal, and they quote fabricated narration to hammer in this falsehood. Although there are hundreds of evidences that prove that Muhammad never married a child, his name, like the names of all the priests who are falsely accused and forever defamed, continue to be cursed and blasphemed by billions of people around the world. There can be no crueler tyranny than slandering a chaste person with slanders and heinous accusations of sexual crimes. It seems that the Christian fathers and the Islamic prophet Muhammad are both the victims of these travesties.

RAPE AND CHILD MARRIAGES IN ISLAM:

Introduction: The Orientalist scholar W. Montgomery wrote: "Of all the world's great men, none has been so much maligned as Muhammad." His quote seems all the more poignant in light of the recent frenzy of many media outlets, film and books, which continued to slander the Islamic prophet, and depicts Muhammad as a paedophile. Like thousands of chaste and celibate priests who have faced false accusations of child abuse, this claim against Muhammad is a recurring one among critics of Islam. Many critics allege that a young girl named Aysha was just six years old when she was betrothed to Muhammad, and only nine when the marriage was consummated. They base this on an alleged saying attributed to Aysha herself from the narration of a Hisham. This claim gained traction due to the confusions many Muslims face about this matter. Afraid of rejecting their own prophet's quotations and traditions, Muslims tend to accept anything which was narrated by one of Muhammad's alleged companions, and some Muslims actually believe this to be a historically accurate account.

Islamic scholars report that the Muhammad was very restrained in his speech, and he used the most eloquent phrases and avoided crude words but there are false narrations in many traditions that misquote him. Yet, why is there such a misunderstanding concerning the character of a man who Muslims claim was non-violent and chaste? Part of the scandals that are flung at Muhammad are due to the various alleged prophetic traditions, which offer false or fabricated quotes about the Islamic prophet. One of these are the allegations that Muhammad was a war-monger, womaniser or the more popular accusation, like child molester. There was only one man, by the name of Hisham, who had reported that Muhammad had married a nine-year-old girl. However, most Muslim scholars do not accept Hisham to be a reliable narrator. There is consensus that Aysha was ten years younger than her elder sister Asma, whose age at the time of the migration to Medina, was over 28. Historically, it can be concluded that Aysha was at least 18 years old at migration. According to Arab sources, upon her moving to Muhammad's house, she was a young woman at 21. The authenticity of Hisham, who was the only narrator of this tradition, has been challenged many times, because it does not correlate with the many historical facts of the time. When Hisham was seventy-years-old, he moved to Iraq and made it his home. Many of his colleagues reported that Hisham suffered from memory loss in his old age, and became a professional storyteller. The people of Medina strongly criticised Hisham for many of his outrageous stories, and august scholars like Imam Malik and Imam Abu Hynifah, refused to accept his narrations and even criticised him for his Iraqi traditions. Some narrators who heard from Hisham that Muhammad married Aysha when she was only nine years of age, believe that due to his old age, Hisham was using colloquial Arabic dialect, that uses nine to denote nineteen, and hence the misunderstanding. Other Muslim jurists think that this alteration to make Aysha look young was purposely and maliciously made later.

At the age of forty, when Muhammad first preached to his people about believing in one God, and abandon idolatry, among the few people who accepted his monotheistic message was Abu Bakr and his daughter Aysha. If Hisham's

bizarre narration was to be accepted, then Aysha was not supposed to be born at that time, let alone profess faith in a new religion, whose adherents had to be adults of sound mind.

As Muhammad began to ask people to believe and worship the God of Abraham, he was ridiculed by the pagans and even those who once were acquainted with him, began to harass him. They chased after him with rocks and animal refuse and flung the filth in his pathways to prevent him from preaching, but Muhammad was a simple man who forgave their antics. Muslim historians claim that on the day Muhammad visited a neighbouring valley to seek shelter, he was pelted with stones and rocks for kilometres. This was known to be a journey of blood and tears because Muhammad was said to have wept so much bitter tears that no man in the world had shed as much as tears as him. From those hundreds of blows, he had shed so much blood from grave wounds on every part of his body, that he fainted, but despite the dreadful pain, Muhammad endured the ill-treatment patiently, as he was incapable of getting angry or give way to hatred. Only love and compassion brimmed in his aching heart and he wished for nothing except that his people should be saved from the wrath of heavens. Muslims narrate that there was no passionate rage in Muhammad's body and he did not curse those blasphemers and torturers, but prayed to God to forgive them. But his human heart was wrought in pain, and only helpless guilt remained, only oceans of tears remained, and only grief-stained blood remained in his body to be shed.

Some scholars who deal with Muhammad's life wondered if Aysha was married off so early because it was possible that girls in seventh century Arabia matured at an early age, but this was not a common custom of the Arabs at that time. There is no such case on records either before or after Islam of anyone ever marrying a little girl of nine, and Muhammad himself married off his daughter Fatima at the age of 21. His other daughter Rokaya married the love of her life at the age of 23. Abu Bakr, who was also a close friend of Muhammad, married off his older daughter Asma when she was twenty-six years old. Marrying young girls was not a custom at that time, and this suggests that Aysha could not logically have been a little girl.

One year after Muhammad migrated to Medina, Muslims were coming under extreme attacks from their pagan enemies in Mecca, and for many months, random Muslim merchants were kidnapped and tortured brutally and ordered to abandon belief in one God. It was a turbulent time for the believer of God, and although the pagans constantly raided Muslim locales, Muhammad initially forbade his people to take up arms. However, after one year of terrible hardship, Muslims were granted permission to defend themselves, and this led to the battle of Badar. Aysha mentioned that she was present in the battlefield and tended to the wound of men, and eyewitnesses reported that they saw Aysha carrying water in heavy goatskins and carrying dead or wounded men to safety. They had described her as a grown woman. Aysha being present on the battle ground is significant because Muhammad refused to take boys of less than 15 years of age to any of the battles, so it would have been impossible for him to allow a nine or ten-year-old to accompany him on a rough and risky military mission.

Like the false allegations against Catholic priests which have inundated the press and are still propagated by unscrupulous media personalities, the Muslims and their prophet have been accused of numerous fake crimes from terrorisms to sex crimes. It is not the Islamic religion alone that have been marked for annihilation, but there seems to be a rigorous campaign in play for exterminating every ounce of honour and dignity from the life of the Muslim prophet Muhammad, who is believed to have been a chaste and righteous man who tried to revive the monotheistic doctrines of Abraham.

Among the thousands of crimes which the Muslim prophet has been accused of, none may be more preposterous than rape and murder, as Arab historians have testified to their prophet's impeccable character, but despite obvious inconsistencies, these false accusations had gained momentum in recent years.

One of the common accusations against Muhammad was that he married a little nine-year-old girl named Aysha, but both secular historians and Muslim religious scholars have proven beyond reasonable doubt that Islam's prophet had never married any young girl, and his second wife, whom he was pressured into marrying, was a nineteen-year-old woman named Aysha, who had been betrothed before, and had a child. In addition to the illusory union between Muhammad and Aysha, it is a well-known fact, testified by all the women who claimed to be his wife, that Muhammad never consummated his marriages and never touched or saw any of the women he allegedly married, and Aysha herself swore that neither had she even seen the prophet and never did he see or been intimate with her.

Critics of Islam then go on to claim that Muhammad married a Jewish women named Sophia by force, after allegedly capturing her from a battle, but this story had also been disproved by historians, who pointed out how Sophia had for many years, fancied the Arab prophet and was desperate to marry him, but her Jewish husband was

abusive and refused to divorce her. He would beat Sophia and smashed her face several times, upon which Sophia escaped from her Jewish clan and begged Muhammad to give her shelter and safety.

Sophia was a Jewish woman who lived in a town called Khaybar. Her father Huwae was one of the chiefs in the area, but his brother, or Sophia's uncle Abu Yasir, converted to Islam but still lived with his Jewish family members in Khaybar. Many false narrations claim Muhammad married Sophia soon after her husband died, which was clearly false. Even though Sophia's Jewish husband would often beat her black and blue, and smashed her face several times, she could not leave her husband's house immediately, and instead, secretly converted to the Islamic religion after learning about it from her uncle who was a former Jewish scholar but had believed in Muhammad's final message.

The narration which mentions that Muhammad married the Jewish women came from only one person, and he was a young boy named Anas. During the last few years of his life, Anas came to live with the prophet because his father had died and his mother's new husband would not treat him kindly. Muhammad was happy to raise Anas as his own son, and from the age of five to the age of fifteen, this little boy lived and thrived in Muhammad's household.

Anas was a little boy when the Prophet met with Sophia and he did not realise that no marriage took place between the two, but when he saw them conversing, the child assumed they were married. But it should be noted that Anas, in addition to being a little boy at that time, had narrated this tradition at the old age of hundred, after marrying approximately eight hundred women and having two thousand children himself, which caused many Muslim jurists to be sceptical of his words.

Almost nothing is concrete in Islamic history, because most of the stories were narrated by Levant Christians who added many traditions in Muslim books after the death of Muhammad. Those instigators were reasonable for killing thirty thousand of Muhammad's closest companions and began a desperate campaign to erase the Koran, but they failed only because hundreds of thousands of Muslims, including little children, had every word and verse of the Koran memorised, so altering or editing or erasing the book was impossible, so those fake converts to Islam decided to add thousands of misquotes about the Muslim prophet in order to blacken his name. Some even pretended to be Muslim and the Umayyad leaders, former pagans who were likely pretending to be Muslims, would readily allow those Surian Christians to hold senior positions in the Islamic empire, and this allowed them to add a plethora of fake traditions and false stories about imaginary atrocities such as the incidents with the Jews in Khaybar.

Khaybar had eight key fortresses inside which the Jews lived peacefully, but when several men among them were found guilty of murder, rape and sedition, they were asked by other Jewish tribes to surrender and stand trial. A fellow Jew, by the name of Saad, was chosen to be the arbiter and he ruled according to their Jewish laws, and historians claim that around nine men who were found guilty of capital crimes were sentenced to death, and fellow Jews promptly beheaded them and the incident was closed for the next hundred years.

After the Jews returned to their homes, Sophia, who was eager to escape her abusive husband, hurriedly wanted to go with the Muslims, with a burning desire to soon marry Muhammad, but the Muslim prophet was disinterested in this proposition and sent her to a safehouse where Sophia recuperated and lived with other Arab women for several years. At the end of his years in Medina, when Muhammad was poisoned by some assassins and nearly died, Sophia once more begged him to marry her and give her the exalted position of being a wife of the prophet, and this time, Muhammad reluctantly agreed to wed the Jewish widow, but as usual, he did not consummate this marriage.

But the rumours of forced marriage, kidnaping and even murder began to spread within fifty years of the Muslim prophet's death, and soon, there were Christians, Jews, pagans and agnostics who began to slander the Islamic religion and its founder Muhammad, by teaching people fake traditions and false narrations about Arabs.

For nearly fifteen hundred years, the hate against Muslims gained such momentum, that most people began to believe in these lies about Muslims, and for the past twenty years, every crime that took place in Asia, Africa and the Middle East was squarely blamed on Muslims and any suspected criminal whose name remotely sounded Islamic or was Arabic was instantaneously branded as a terrorist in an effort to make it look as though their religion sanctioned it as such. The mainstream media does not care if the perpetrator has never practised their faith or is even a believer, but the religion of Islam is demonised and they can achieve their secular goals of demoralising the religious communities.

Some critics of Muslims claim that Islamic Law does not punish rapists, and they cite fake history anecdotes like the incidents with the Jews of Khaybar, and point out that Muhammad's Jewish wife, Sophia, was somehow forcibly married to him, or as some later Christian sources claimed, that he brought her against her will.

The Punishment of Rape:

Whether sexual abuse was deemed a crime in the Islamic religion is easy to determine, and upon studying how the perpetrators of rape were dealt with in the lifetime of the Muslim Prophet Muhammed and his Companions, it can be deduced that Islam has not only withdrawn all leniency on the rapist but also the wrath against the offender has always been in full fury. The punishment of the criminal is that it is, but the authority sitting in judgement has also been warned and instructed that here at least he should not grant any concession to the violator to whom Islam has emphasized the importance of sexual morality and along with it displayed to him the detrimental effect of forceful, violent rape.

Criminals who wilfully transgressed the limits extended to him by religious law without any disregard are sentenced vigorously.

Muslim jurists say that the woman who has become the victim of such brutality and is compelled to commit illegal sexual intercourse against her will is exempted from all penalties and punishments, as their Koran declares: But if anyone compels them, yet after such compulsion is Allah Most Forgiving, Most Merciful.

In the days of ignorance some pagan men subjected their female servants to forceful harlotry for contemptible worldly gain. Since the element of coercion was utilised on these women, they were therefore raped against their will.

In a famous incident which took the small Muslim community by storm, a servant raped a female worker, and the culprit was brought before the court of Caliph Omar, who after investigating the case, sentenced the offender, but acquitted the slave girl who was forcefully raped.

There is also another incident which occurred during the time of the Muslim Prophet when a woman came out of her house to join the congregational prayer in the mosque. En-route she was forcefully grabbed by a man who raped her. She screamed and her cries alerted the people who rushed to her rescue and caught the rapist red-handed. He was then produced before the Prophet, and the rapist confessed his guilt and he was punished according to the religious verdict and to the woman, the Prophet said: "Go, you have been forgiven by Allah."

According to Muslim laws, in forced sexual intercourse such as rape, the innocent party cannot be punished at all. On the contrary he or she is entitled to compensation in some form or the other, but somehow, mainstream media have been giving a negative impression of the Islamic religious laws, until they were successful in breeding hatred towards a religious community of two billion people.

When a governmental male servant tried to seduce a slave girl until he deflowered her against her will, the case was brought before the Muslim legitimate ruler, and therefore the enraged Caliph flogged the rapist according to the law and exiled him in the desert, but he did not flog nor punish the female victim because she had been compelled to indulge in illegal sexual intercourse.

But hundreds of fake narrations of the Muslim prophet exist which falsely suggests that murder or rape was condoned by Islam.

Why are there so many false traditions associated to the Muslim prophet, and what was the reason for such fabricated narrations to be present in Muslim books of exegesis? One of the Great Trials in Muslim history took place within a decade after Muhamad's death, and the Arabian Peninsula fell into chaos. The leader of the Muslim, known as the Caliph Omar, was brutally assassinated by a fire-worshipper, who was part of a larger conspiracy to eradicate this new monotheistic religion from earth. The assassination of Omar was the beginning of a reign of utter terror, where one after the other, five Muslim leaders were murdered by organized group of assassins, who worked for a covert group that served to contaminate this new faith with heresies and fabricated traditions, and kill every last member who adhered to the Islamic faith. Their main objective was to distort Koran, the Muslim holy book, by adding numerous fake verses in it, but this plan disastrously failed due to the Muslim practice of memorizing the

entire Koran. Hundreds and thousands of men, women and children in Mecca, Medina and the greater Hejaz had the entire Koran committed to memory with photographic precision, and all attempts to change the verses or alter the order of chapters backfired.

Among the numerous Muslim leaders who were assassinated by members of this non-Muslim group were Omar, Osman, Ali, and Muhammad's grandson Husain. After the assassination of Husain, all his followers and friends were brutally murdered, and the new illegitimate leader seized command of the Muslim population. However, the people of Medina refused to accept this murderous leader as their commander, so they sought sanctuary in the prophet's holy city. But the mercenaries who had murdered so many Muslim leaders now sought to execute every last member of the Islamic prophet's companions, friends and family. The butchering army swarmed the sanctuary cities of Mecca and Medina, and sexually assaulted the Muslim women, forced others into slavery, pillaged every home, and ransacked the city and burned down the mosque.

For several months, the Muslim holy city of Mecca was besieged by this non-Muslim force, until the army withdrew as a result of their leader's death in November 683. By this time, this belligerent group had successfully burned every last parchment that contained quotations of the Islamic prophet. For the next ten years, the Muslim world knew only wars, and saw only bloodshed in scores of civil wars breaking out in every city and town, and the groups that had tried to destroy the two holy cities continued to attack and distort every article of the Muslim faith, by adding fabricated prophetic traditions in an effort to erase the Islamic religion. They may have well been successful had it not been for the thousands of men and women who continued to memorize every word of the Koran, with fierce linguistic accuracy to the last letter. This ensured that the Koran remained unchanged through the passage of time, and after fifteen hundred years, remains, as Muir, a well-known critic of Islam said in the introduction of his book, that every verse in the Koran is the genuine and unaltered composition of Muhammad himself and remains in its pristine form.

Although the majority of all learned Muslim scholars were dead by the end of the century, and no written evidence of any prophetic traditions existed, the youths of Arabia gathered to recite the Koran from memory and carefully wrote down the verses in various calligraphic art, and continued to teach children and enable them to memorize the verses. Eventually, some of the keen students recalled snippets from their parents and grandparents and tried to restore to paper some of the prophetic sayings from memory. But one of the false narrations that lingered in the Muslim books of prophetic narrations is the age of Muhammad's second wife, Aysha, who critics say was only nine years old at the time of her marriage. But historical evidence proves otherwise. Several years prior to her wedding to Muhammad, Aysha was not only betrothed to her childhood sweet-heart, but she was known as the 'mother of Abdulla' because she adopted a boy named Abdulla, and as per Arab customs, her title was derived from the name of a child. It is inconceivable that a young girl who was nine-year-old could have had a child, or adopted a son. If, according to some fabricated narrations, Aysha was only eight or nine at the time of her wedding, then she would not have been eligible for adoption. False accusations of God are not a new phenomenon and both Christianity and Islam faced its share of slander in the past decades.

Although Muhammad spent his entire life preaching peace, there are many who still accuse him of aggression. Islam's Prophet Muhammad's treaties with the Christians of his time uniformly state that Muslims are not to attack Christian communities, but defend them "until the End of the World." Authored by Muhammad himself, they represent a third foundational pillar for Islam outside of Koran and prophetic traditions, and these treaties were better known among Christians, in seventh century Arabia.

According to these principles, when the Muslim Caliph Omar took Jerusalem in 637, he rode into the city by the side of the Patriarch Sophronius, conversing with him on its antiquities. Not a drop of blood was shed, and he promised peace to everyone. However, according to the testimonies of Christian historians, when the Crusaders entered the city of Jerusalem, they had shed blood of civilians and even may have driven Jews into their synagogues and burned them. An estimated of 70,000 men, women, and children, were killed, but Islam's rulers had always tried to abide by the rules of their prophet Muhammad, and the first Caliph Abu Bakr repeatedly and emphatically directed the Muslim generals to refrain from killing or injuring women, children, and old men, not to destroy the fields of grain or date trees, and to sheath the sword at once upon the surrender of a city. Humanity, mercy, and kindness were insisted upon.

When the Muslim Prophet Muhammad entered Mecca upon its surrender to him, not a man, woman, or child was killed or ill-treated, and not a single house was plundered, although this was the city in which he had been so shamefully abused and persecuted, and its inhabitants were those who had cruelly wronged him. The reason

Muhammad did not take revenge when the opportunity offered itself was because there not a single sentiment of revenge or malice in his whole being. Muslims insists that their prophet Muhammad was Prophet of the God and a man of love, truth, justice, and mercy. Muhammad never advocated, taught, nor consented to the propagation of Islam by means of the sword, and he severely condemned violence and taking of life in any form. Islam inculcates and demands a hearty and sincere belief in all that it teaches, and that genuine faith which proceeds from a person's heart cannot be obtained by force or violence, as the Muslim's Koran insist, "Let there be no forcing in religion; the right way has been made clearly distinguishable from the wrong one."

FALSE ALLEGATIONS AGAINST MUHAMMAD:

What are the sources of the ancient falsities?

Syria was the main centre of Eastern Orthodox Christianity, during the seventh century. The Levant and Syria were occupied by the Muslim Arabs under the overall leadership of Abu Bakr, resulting in the region becoming part of the Islamic world. In 635 Damascus and its inhabitants were promised security for their lives, property, and churches, and the Christians lived alongside their Muslim neighbours and the entire Levant prospered.

Conversion to Islam began prior to the Muslim's entry into the Levant, especially among the Arab tribes who had already settled in Syria. The Muslim rule in the region was generally flexible, with no excessive taxation or oppression. In the mid-7th century, the Umayyad dynasty, then rulers of the empire, placed the capital of the empire in Damascus and they began to form a unified government, where nearly half of the state's ministers, judges and treasurers were devout Christians. As the gradual Arabization of the Levant took place, many Syrians pretended to be Muslim in order to gain greater privilege in court. It is believed that those elite group of hypocrites were responsible for many of the slanders that are until this day, being propagated against Muslims and their prophet. They were also responsible for spreading the gossip about Muhammad allegedly marrying a nine-year-old girl, by the name of Aysha, but historical facts clearly show that Aysha was an old and mature woman at the time of her wedding to Muhammad. Reports to the effect that Aysha died in the 58th year after Hijra when she had reached the age of seventy-five are authentic. Those historic narratives give detailed information such as the day she died as being Wednesday, that it corresponded to the 17th day of the Islamic month of Ramadan, that upon her request she was buried at night after the midnight prayer in the Medina graveyard, that again upon her last request the funeral prayer was led by Abu Hurairah and that she was lowered into the grave by persons like her sister Asma's two sons, Abdullah and Urawa, her brother Muhammad's two sons, Qasim and Abdullah, and her brother Abdurrahman's son Abdullah. Therefore, when calculations are made according to this date, we see that Aysha lived 49 years after the Muhammad's death, meaning she was born three years before his prophethood and, in view of this information, she was no less than 18 when she married. Islamic scholars feel that it is glaringly obvious that those who claim Aysha was nine years old were either genuinely confused or they had deliberately inserted fabricated narrations into the books of traditions and Islamic jurisprudence.

For seventy years, all Muslim texts were destroyed and thousands were slaughtered by those Syrian leaders who pretended to be Muslims. Every relative of Islamic prophet Muhammad were executed, including his grandson Hussein, who was brutally murdered in Karbala. Every man in Medina was killed, every woman violated, and every child enslaved. The only reason the Muslim holy book survived was because thousands of women, men and children had every line and verse committed to memory, and this is how the scripture had been preserved for centuries. All authentic prophetic traditions were removed, and every Friday sermon which Muhammad ever said was deleted. Those fake Muslims removed all original prophetic traditions and replaced those with fake narrations, such as the false age of Aysha, which portrays her as a little girl, when in reality, she was a nineteen-year-old woman when she was betrothed to Muhammad. Similarly, fake traditions falsely attributed to the Muhammad include some strange tales where he allegedly instructs men to drink camel milk and urine, when Islamic religious law strictly prohibits such practices.

Muslims and their prophet Muhammad have been, on many occasions, falsely accused of child molestation. Despite obvious evidence that Muhammad never married a child named Aysha, and that neither was he ever physically intimate with his wives, millions of people zealously accuse him of obscene behaviour and false speech. From his childhood, until his death, Muhammad embodied a perfect character and lived a sublime life and was more shy than a virgin in her seclusion. Following the years after Muhammad's death, civil war was rampant in the Arab-speaking world, and within fifty years, more than fifty-thousands of Muhammad's closest friends, followers and family

members were killed and the rest enslaved. Those belligerent groups that conducted these massacres were often men who pretended to convert to Islam, only to destroy Muslim cities from within, kill all the men and assault the women and enslave their children. In their impersonations, they also wrote thousands of fabricated stories and traditions and taught the unsuspecting Muslims that their own prophet had ordered such outlandish practices. Muslims at that time were doubly confused. They did not know which prophetic narrations were authentic and which were fabricated. For instance, Islam has strict hygiene laws which stipulate that touching or drinking unclean items such as urine and pus are prohibited without any exception, but some of those mercenary leaders taught the Muslims that Muhammad had ordered them to drink camel's urine. Many Muslims suspected that these traditions were fabricated, and they were desperate to find the authentic narrations of their prophet. By the end of the seventh century, tens of thousands of false traditions have been associated to Muhammad, and his critics use those narrations to demonise him even today. Although the only true source or religious instruction for Muslims is the Koran, one of the supplemental sources of Islamic traditions for Sunni Muslims have been a book compiled by an Uzbeki author. Born in what is today Uzbekistan, Bukhari was a keen student and learned the Arabic language sparingly, and attempted to collect all the prophetic traditions and quotations he could come across, and made a daring effort to separate the authentic narrations from the fabricated ones. He finally complied several thousand narrations in a book called 'Abridged authentic collection from the affairs of the Messenger, peace be upon him, and his traditions and his days.' While some Arabs doubted the young man's authenticity, with critics suggesting he may have been a pagan Mongolite, many Muslims in his time were impressed, and the people of Uzbekistan were elated to find a scholar in their midst and they glorified him, and eventually, his book became popular with Sunni Muslims, who considered his book to be authentic. However, it was an ambitious project for a young man whose native tongue was not even Arabic, and whose religion was under question, and the book was believed to contain many partially authentic sayings of the prophet. But soon after Bukhari published his book, the second and third editions began to appear in various libraries, and somehow, many fabricated narrations made its way into the pages of a manuscript which was initially considered factually accurate. One of the most popular traditions in today's Bukhari is the fabricated narration about Aysha's age, which quotes her as saying she married Muhammad at the age of nine. These false traditions were one among many that the mercenaries had propagated soon after Muhammad's demise, but these continued to be reprinted in Sunni Islam's libraries, because out of extreme caution, Sunni scholars hesitate to dismiss anything associated to the prophet to be false, and since Aysha enjoyed the privilege of being their prophet's wife, Sunni jurists give due honour to her name and refrain from criticising her words or actions. Shiite Muslims, on the other hand, dismiss everything narrated by Aysha as false and abhorrent. While the Sunnis consider Aysha to be chaste, many Shiite Muslims believe her to be a fornicator who assassinated the prophet by administering poison to him in guise of giving him medicine.

False cases against religious men are not a new phenomenon. It has existed for thousands of years, and it is not only the Catholic priests who face such insults and slander. Among the numerous slanders which people enthusiastically repeat against the Muslim's prophet Muhammad, is his alleged marriage to a nine-year-old virgin girl named Aysha. His allegation has been levied against Muhammad to likely discredit his teachings and life's works. However, the people who make this accusation speak without any evidence as historical facts provide clear proof that Aysha was not only much older, but she had been previously betrothed to a man from respectable Arab family. She was betrothed to a Jubair, the son of Mutam, several before her engagement with Muhammad. As is known, this betrothal was broken by Jubair's family due to the possible religious conversion of Aysha's father to Islam, and it was only after this divorce, that Aysha's devastated father wished to engage her to Muhammad to save her from societal disgrace of being a rejected wife. It is unclear how many years Aysha was betrothed to Jubair, but her first marriage agreement was either made before the prophetic mission or when the call to Islam was being made openly, three years after Muhammad began receiving revelation. This implies that Aysha was born even earlier than has been thought. For this reason, some historians suggest that she must have been at least twenty at the time of her wedding. In regards to the time line, if it is assumed that Aysha was nine at the time of her betrothal to Muhammad, then it would imply that she was born four years after the preaching mission, meaning that she had not yet been born, at the time of her betrothal to Jubair or when this engagement was broken. When we look at information passed down from authentic historic sources, it is apparent that Aysha was born in 605, engaged at the age of 15 and married at the age of 18 and her first husband had been a young man whose family became enraged upon seeing Aysha's father abandon pagan practices, and therefore, sent her back to her parent's house.

Sunnis and Shiite Muslims agree on fairly everything in their faith, and believe in almost all of the same tenets, but the only point at which these two groups of Muslims disagree is the age of Muhammad's second wife, Aysha, a

woman who was reported to have been nine-years-old at the time of her wedding. Many people wonder how a chaste man like Muhammad could have done such a disturbing act, but Shite Muslims do not consider Aysha to be a reliable woman and they refuse to accept her narrations and dismiss all her quotes as blatant falsehood. However, the Sunnis agree that while everything about Aysha may not be pristine, she was unlikely to have lied intentionally about the prophet. When Aysha's mother was told that Muhammad would marry her daughter, the woman recoiled in horror, and exclaimed that Aysha was a cunning woman who would destroy Muhammad's life with her mischievousness. Aysha's mother was against this marriage arrangement, but Abu Bakr, who had only recently faced the utter devastation of having his daughter rejected by her previous husband, was eager to avoid a scandal and wanted Aysha to marry Muhammad, at least in official capacity, because Muhammad was known never to have consummated any of his marriages except the first one with Khadeejah. The age difference between Aisha and her little brother Abdurrahman is also striking. Abdurrahman converter to Muhammad's religion after the Treaty of Hudoba was signed, six years after the start of the Islamic calendar. He was famously present in the side of the polytheist during the Battle of Badri, which took place in the second year after the Hijra. All authentic historical sources confirm that on the day of the battle, Abdurrahman was an adult man who fought valiantly, and even tried to duel with his father. On that day Abdurrahman was 20 years old. In other words, he must have been born in 604. Taking into consideration the conditions of that time, the probability is low that the older sister of a child born in 604 would be born 10 years later in 614. Put another way, at a time when the age difference between brothers and sisters is one or two years, it is likely that Aisha was born at least two years before her brother. This would mean she was well over twenty years of age at the time of her marriage, and at the minimum, may have been nineteen at the year of betrothal. But many people continue to bring in fake narrations of the 7th century Arabs and pass them as authentic, but Muslims scholars are unanimous that the only true authority in Islam is their Koran, and prophetic traditions can never dominate the Koran.

These false charges against Muhammad are unsurprising especially when one sees how often innocent Catholic priests are accused of child abuse. After seeing so many chaste priests being falsely accused, I have surmised that anyone who remains chaste will inevitably face the envious wrath of someone somewhere. It is as though there is a group behind all these false allegations against the priests who have only one obsession; to portray religious men as vile criminals. Although Muhammad taught people to be compassionate to the weak and destitute widows, divorcees, orphans, and elderly women, the fake Muslim group who controlled Mecca and Medina for seventy years and pillage all Muslim lands, were obsessed to make Muhammad look like a child molester and fornicator. They created thousands of false narrations to make people believe in all their lies, and even claimed the Muhammad had lots of slave girls, when in reality, the Islamic prophet was never intimate with any of his wives, except his first wife, who was many years his senior. When real Muslims were able to gain power after nearly hundred years, they tried to remove the false traditions, but feared that cancelling some narrations would risk cancelling all, so they decided to keep religious texts untouched and only used the unchanging Koran as the guide to their lives. When church fathers, who lived their lives in chastity and obedience, get a false case against them, they immediately receive bitter hatred from their own people, and everyone begins to despise them like a madman. However, if an irreligious promiscuous man married a different eighteen-year-old boy ever week, for the rest of his life, then people would be proud of him, worship his feet like an altar, and honour him with endless praises for his gallantry.

It seems that Muhammad was hated by so many people and is still cursed and insulted by so many billion people due to his charitable acts in which he offered women equal rights as men, and declared that all men and women were equal in the eyes of God. I think that some people who hate the church fathers today are upset because these priests uphold unusually noble values. Those people who malign the name of priests in order to destroy their honour are angry because these very priests honour women and call upon others to treat them well. They are often charged with child molestation because these priests do everything in their power to prevent other children from abuse, and speak vehemently against deviated sexual practices such as incest and rape.

Muhammad himself was as thoroughly unaggressive, non-combative and peace-loving as the typical desert boy, and while he realised the fact that a policy of perfect non-resistance would speedily have resulted in the murder of himself and every Muslim in Arabia, he urged his followers to avoid, as far as possible, violent collisions with the unbelievers and not to fight unless it was necessary in order to protect their lives. Muslim historians say that there

are a number of false accusations made against Muhammad's people, which, even if true, cannot justly be said to have even the remotest relation to the doctrines of Islam. It is true that there are zealots and fanatics in all religious bodies, and it is due to their weaknesses that discredit falls upon the faith they profess to follow. It would be useless to attempt to reply to all the false charges made against Muhammad and his followers, that are perpetuated by ignorant and prejudiced writers, because for many decades, similar prejudice had been shown against honourable priests and chaste monks who have also been accused of being sex abusers and molesters, and until this day, hundreds of false allegations are levied against these pious priests and Friars.

Muslims who governed in Greece for many centuries ensured that their Christian neighbours were treated honourably, and Christians have been permitted to live in the peaceable possession of their properties, their religion, their priests, bishops, patriarchs, and churches

Some critics of Islam had branded Muhammad as the great Arabian Impostor who taught only contradictions and blasphemy.

It is worth noting that the accusation of blasphemy is emphasized against Muhammad because he affirmed that God, being unmarried, was incapable of having a Son! The fallacious argument, however, is apparent from the Muhammad's own views of the nature of God as contained in the second chapter of the Koran: "To Allah (God) belongeth the east and the west; therefore, whithersoever ye turn yourselves to pray, there is the face of Allah; for Allah is omnipresent and omniscient. They say. Allah hath begotten children: Allah forbid! To him belongeth whatever is in heaven, and on earth; all is possessed by him, the Creator of heaven and earth; and when he decreeth a thing, he only saith unto it, Be, and it is."

In other words, the God of Islam has but to desire and the object of that desire at once comes into being, whereas the God of non-Islamic religions must proceed in accord with the laws of human generation. Muhammad, the man believed to be Prophet of Islam, and "the desired of all nations," was born in Mecca, A.D. 570 and died in Medina, A.D. 632.

Washington Irving thus describes the signs and wonders accompanying the birth of the Prophet: "His mother suffered none of the pangs of travail. At the moment of his coming into the world, a celestial light illumined the surrounding country, and the new born child, raising his eyes to heaven, exclaimed: 'God is great! There is no God but God, and I am his prophet!' Heaven and earth, we are assured, were agitated at his advent. The Lake Sawa shrank back to its secret springs, leaving its borders dry, while the Tigris, bursting its bounds, overflowed the neighbouring lands. The palace of Khosru, the king of Persia shook to its foundations, and several of its towers were toppled to the earth. In the same eventful night, the sacred fire of Zoroaster, which, guarded by the Magi, had burned without interruption for upward of a thousand years, was suddenly extinguished, and all the idols in the world fell down." (See Muhammad and His Successors.)

While the Prophet Muhammad was still but a little babe, the Angel Gabriel with seventy wings came to him, and cutting open the child, withdrew the heart. This Gabriel cleansed of the black drop of original sin which is in every human heart because of the perfidy of Adam and then returned the organ to its proper place in the Prophet's body. (See E. H. Palmer's translation of the Qur'an.)

In his youth Muhammad travelled with the Meccan caravans, on one occasion acted as armour-bearer for his uncle, and spent a considerable time among the Bedouins, from whom he learned many of the religious and philosophic traditions of ancient Arabia. While traveling with his uncle, Abu Talib, Muhammad contacted the Nestorian Christians, having encamped on a certain night near one of their monasteries. Here the young Prophet-to-be exchanged warm greeting with the members of the Christian faith, and ever since, greatly loved them as bosom friends.

Muhammad and Polygamy:

An Overview: While the empire of the Persians was crumbling under despotism and the oriental part of the Roman empire was reduced to the most deplorable and unhappy state, the early years of the seventh century saw much social and moral decay. Ethics were dissipating, and heretic Christians and warring Jews were vying for power with one another, when at the eastern coast of the Red Sea, a child was born to a young widow named Ameena in the city

of Mecca. It was at the end of the 570th year of the Christian era when the lonely widow in impoverished circumstances, still mourning the husband who had been deceased for several months, delivered the healthy boy. The infant was beautiful to look upon, and as he advanced in years, the sweetness of his disposition rivalled the beauty of his person. His grandfather took him under his care but soon, he too succumbed to the terrors of death and left the child to be doubly orphaned. However, one of his uncles sent the child away to a nursing mother, many kilometres away, deep into the nomadic lands where neither wealth nor vegetation could be found. But the child grew up with a pleasant demeanour, and it seemed that nature had done for him everything, but fortune withheld her favours. He was poor, and though his uncle did not choose to leave him to perish in his infancy, he did not choose to expend any portion of his wealth to educate him, or to raise him above the very lowest situation in life. When old enough, he began to earn his bread as a shepherd boy and a camel-driver, in which capacity, for many years, he traversed diverse towns and cities, by which he acquired a knowledge of men and things.

This child was Muhammad, who was born at the beginning of the seventh century, at a period in history when the due to the weakness of the Byzantine despots, the whole frame of their government was in a state of complete disorganisation and in many countries, because of the consequence of the most frightful abuses and corruption of some priests, the Christian religion had fallen into a state of degradation and pious Christian men and women remained secluded in tight-knit communities and worshiped their Lord in secret.

Pagan societies in Asia, Africa and Arabia were embroiled in bitter feuds and animosities as innumerable sects of various customs, religions and traditions rose in every hill, and pillaging and marauding had become such a norm towns and cities flowed with blood. At this time, in a remote and almost unknown corner of Arabia, at a distance from the civil broils which were tearing the Roman empire to pieces, arose the monotheistic religion of Islam, which was introduced to the Arabs by their brethren Muhammad. But since then, there had been thousands of different versions about Muhammad and his life's work, with the majority offering distorted views of a man who had dedicated his life to serve his people, lived in obscurity and died in poverty.

In Carlyle's works, he wrote in length about why there were so many misunderstanding about the Muslim prophet Muhammad, and stated, "I confess I can make nothing of the critics in these times, who would accuse Mohammed of deceit perpense, of conscious deceit generally, or perhaps, at all; still more, of living in a mere element of conscious deceit, and writing this Koran as a forger and a juggler would have done. Every candid eye, I think, will read the Koran far otherwise than so."

When Muslim Spain was the centre of an exalted civilization, the home of wealth, education and refinement, and the fountain-head of the material arts and sciences, Christian Europe was wallowing in degradation and barbarism, and it was at this time that they were inventing all sorts of falsehoods concerning Islam, prompted by their hatred, misunderstanding and jealousy of a people who were apparently their superiors in every respect. This spirit of animosity then descended from generation to generation, and its influence can be plainly seen in nearly all the literature extant concerning Muhammad and Islam, which are written by Christian authors. Most Christian authors who had given the world a work depreciating the character of the Muslim Prophet and his teachings, has drawn his inspiration from the old and biased non-Muslim sources, and has inadvertently aided in perpetuating falsehoods and false opinions of centuries ago. It was only when British historians and orientalist like John Davenport and Godfrey Higgins dug under the piles of false history and brought to light some portions of the truth, that the English-speaking world got glimpses of that eternal verity which still rules the lives of so many millions of the human race. In Godfrey Higgins wrote 1829, that Muslims were bound to ethical and moral codes, and he cited examples from history that demonstrated tolerance of men who adhered to the tenets of Islam, and claimed, "Thus, this was the impact of the teachings Muhammad gave to the Muslims that Islam is not a religion of force, pressure and compulsion; it is a faith or belief by heart."

Muslims have been taught by their religion that they should not despise and hate those who vilify them, for that would be diametrically opposed to the spirit of their Prophet's teachings, who told them that it is every believer's duty to be patient with dissenters, and try to teach enemies the right path, and lead them out of the darkness of ignorance into the light of truth. The Muslims holy Koran teaches them that if they do this, they will receive a great reward. They are instructed to show others the true path, patiently and earnestly, and if they stubbornly refuse to walk in it, they will suffer and the Muslims will have the content consciousness of having done their duty to God and their fellow-man.

Of the many accusations against the Muslim prophet Muhammad, one is the practice of polygamy, and although historians and Arab researchers confirmed that Muhammad had never been intimate with any of his wives, except

his first wife Khadeejah, the idea of polygamy irked many writers even though polygamy was a custom going long back as the days of the Patriarch Abraham, and which, it is certain, from innumerable passages in the Judaic and Christian Scriptures that it has not been regarded as sinful.

People in ancient Greece permitted polygamy and Plutarch mentioned that legions of young men in the army were encouraged to take multiple wives. Polygamy was also defended by Euripides and Plato and ancient Romans freely permitted men to take many wives, and Marc Antony is mentioned in their history documents as taking the liberty of having two wives. From that time, polygamy became frequent in the Roman empire till the reigns of Theodosius, Honorius and Arcadius. After 393 AD, the Emperor Valentinian permitted polygamy by an edict, to all the subjects of the empire, stating that should marry several wives. From the ecclesiastical history of those times, we can also see that the bishops made no objection to the renewed introduction of unlimited polygamy, and as a result, Valentius Constantius, son of Constantine the Great, had many wives as did Clotaire, King of France, and his sons Heribartus and Hypericus had a plurality of wives also.

Polygamy was present almost everywhere in Europe, Africa and Asia, as we know that Pepin and Charlemagne had several wives, and Lothaire and his son, as likewise Arnolpus VII, Emperor of Germany during 888 A. Among the descendants of Charlemagne, Frederic Barbarossa and Philip Theodatus, King of France also practiced polygamy.

When the British orientalist and historian, John Davenport, wrote a book about the life of Muhammad, he wrote that he hoped his earnest endeavour to free the history of Muhammad from false accusations and illiberal imputations, would be worthwhile, as he embarked upon a mission to vindicate Muhammad's just claim to be regarded as one of the greatest benefactors of mankind. Davenport, in his book, *An Apology for Mohammed and the Koran*, wrote: The writers who, misguided by a blind zeal, have thus assailed the fair fame of the Restorer of the Worship of the Unity, have not only shown themselves to be wholly uninfluenced by the spirit of that charity so strongly and emphatically inculcated by the Saviour himself, but have also erred in judgment, for the least reflection would have convinced them that it is not from a Christian and modem stand-point that the Prophet and his doctrines ought to be examined and criticised, but from an Eastern one ; in other words, Mohammed should be contemplated and judged as a religious reformer and legislator living in Arabia in the seventh century after Christ, and he must then, most undoubtedly, be acknowledged as the very greatest man whom Asia can claim as her son, if not, one of the rarest and most transcendent geniuses the world itself ever produced. If we consider what the Arabs were before Mohammed's appearance and what they became after it — if we reflect, moreover, upon the enthusiasm kindled and kept alive by his doctrine in the breasts of more than one hundred and sixty millions of the human race — we cannot but feel that to withhold our admiration from so extraordinary and so great a man would be the most flagrant injustice, and that to attribute his advent to mere blind chance would be to doubt the over-rueling power of Divine Providence. The Islamic prophet Muhammad had been targeted and scorned by today's media. Millions of people dedicate hours of their lives away, trying to perpetuate lies and slanders against the Arab prophet and as a part of their smear campaign against him, they accuse him of being a womaniser, tyrant and even a child molester. Like the priests who are being falsely accused of abusing children, Muhammad continues to be cursed and belittled in every social media network, every news channel and every country in the world. As a man who never looked at a woman and abolished slavery and banned forced and child marriages, Muhammad received criticisms at epic proportions. There are millions of serial killers, habitual molesters, child traffickers, rapists and assassins in the world, but no one gets nearly as much criticisms and hate as Muhammad, the poor orphan who tried to abolish ancient pagan customs of female infanticide and dedicate his life to give women the right to live honourably. Like the priests of our time who have taken oaths of chastity and poverty, Muhammad lived in such acute destitution that for many months, there would be no food in his house, and his companions would often see him walking with large stones tied to his abdomen out of terrible hunger and starvation, because he had given all his wealth away to charity. Yet, the hatred of people against Muhammad is astonishing, but the slanders against him in not astonishing because the Christian priests are somehow assaulted with similar fraudulent cases and like Muhammad, they too are accused of paedophilia, and the Christian faith is publicly mocked and sexually exploited. For example, on the day of the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, a professional baseball team chose to honour a drag queen group whose lewdness and vulgarity in mocking our Jesus and his mother, was clearly offensive and painful to believers everywhere.

Hundreds of Agnostics, Jewish, Christian, and even Hindu historians have attempted to shed light on the life of Muhammad, the Muslim prophet from Arabia, but with some degree of bigotry on one side, and involuntary malice on the other, most have so obscured the history of this person, that for most objective readers, it may prove rather difficult to come to a certainty as to the truth of most circumstances respecting Muhammad. The thousands of lies which are propagated against Muhammad by some non-Muslim writers or even Christian orientalist, should be no

more be admitted as evidence against Muhammad, than those can against Jesus Christ stated by Jews, unless exceptionable and verifiable evidence can be found.

Religions have always been targeted by any party that tried to control a nation, and as we had seen previously, the both Christianity and Islam were targeted in recent years. The Christian clergies were often falsely accused of being child molesters, and the Muslim prophet Muhammad was accused of being a womaniser, who allegedly have many wives. However, the actual reason behind the slander about Muhammad's character was due to one obscure prophecy which was mentioned in several Biblical texts, which mentioned that the final promised Messiah or saviour, was to come to earth at the end of times, and he was said to be a man of virtue, who never had sexual relations with any women, be they wives or concubines. When Muhammad proclaimed prophethood, many Arabs believed he was the promised Messiah and prophet who would appear on earth, because the Arabs knew that Muhammad never touched or saw a woman's body in his life. Although he officially had several wives, they were in name only and he was known never to have consummated his marriages due to extreme shyness. Yet, the rumours spread about his alleged promiscuity, until Cyrus of Alexandria became alarmed to hear that Muhammad was likely a virgin prophet who matched all the description of the promised Messiah, so he immediately impregnated two of his female slaves and sent them to Muhammad as gifts, with the strict instruction to the women that they were to coerce and beg Muhammad to marry either one of them. Cyrus wanted the world to believe that Muhammad was not a virginal man and had impregnated a slave girl, and this incident later became known as the slander of Maria the Copt, who eventually gave birth to a boy, which she claimed belonged to Muhammad, but Muslims in Arabia knew it was false because Maria was visibly pregnant when she first arrived in Muhammad's presence and she also gave birth only days after coming to Medina, making it obvious that the child had belonged to Cyrus. However, Muhammad was a gentleman and to prevent Maria the Copt from ill-treatment and slander, he accepted the child as his own son, naming it after Patriarch Abraham, but the infant soon passed away.

Muslim Shiites claim that Muhammad never touched a woman in his life, and his first wife Khadeejah, who was much older and very wealthy, had secured physicians to medically impregnate herself with Muhammad's child without his knowledge. However, Sunni sources accept that Muhammad never consummated any of his marriages after Khadeejah died, but they do not accept that he is a virgin. However, even the most sceptical Sunni admit that Muhammad was more shy and modest than a young virgin girl, and he never saw any woman unclothed and neither did any woman ever see his nakedness.

DOCUMENTATIONS THAT PROVE THE EXISTENCE OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD:

Despite the very authentic historicity of the life and achievements of Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace, vested academic interests have throughout the centuries tried, in vain, to rob him of his rightful place, indeed, his very presence, in the story of human progress. Presented herein under is a compilation of evidences from Western academic sources which reiterate the historic role of the most complete personality that man has known from among his own kind.

"Muhammad is not completely a fiction of later pious imagination, as some have implied; we know that someone named Muhammad did exist, and that he led some kind of movement. And this fact, in turn, gives us greater confidence that further information in the massive body of traditional Muslim materials may also be rooted in historical fact." ~ Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam, p. 53, University of Chicago, Fred Donner – Professor of Near Eastern History

While it has become popular to question the very existence of Prophet Muhammad and other major religious figures like Moses, Jesus, and Buddha, the historical evidence for Prophet Muhammad existing and living in 7th century Arabia is vast and well-documented. Several examples of the earliest sources documenting the existence and mission of Prophet Muhammad are summarized below:

1. A Byzantine Greek text written within two years of Muhammad's death in 634CE confirms he existed and claimed to be a Prophet:

"There is no doubt that Mohammed existed, occasional attempts to deny it notwithstanding. His neighbours in Byzantine Syria got to hear of him within two years of his death at the latest; a GREEK TEXT written during the Arab invasion of Syria between 632 and 634 MENTIONS that 'a prophet has appeared among the Saracens' and

dismisses him as an impostor on the ground that prophets do not come ‘with sword and chariot.’ It thus conveys the impression that he was actually leading the invasions...If such a revised date is accurate, the evidence of the Greek text would mean that Mohammed is the only founder of a world religion who is attested in a contemporary source. But in any case, this source gives us pretty irrefutable evidence that he was a historical figure.” ~ Patricia Crone (Former Professor of Oriental Studies – University of Cambridge), ‘What Do We Actually Know About Mohammed,’ June 2008

2. A Syrian manuscript folio examined by W. Wright, which dates to 636 AD (four years after Prophet Muhammad Peace and blessings be upon him passed away), mentions Prophet Muhammad Sallallaahu alayhi wasallan and the Arab conquest of Syria. Documented in W. Wright, Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum Acquired Since the Year 1838, 1870, Part I, Printed by order of the Trustees: London, No. XCIV, pp. 65-66.

3. Another Syrian manuscript mentions Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) and the Arab conquests and this also comes from the year 634 AD – two years after Prophet Muhammad passed away. See W. Wright, Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum Acquired Since the Year 1838, 1872, Part III, Printed by order of the Trustees: London, No. DCCCCXIII, pp. 1040-1041.

4. The writing of the Syrian Christian Thomas the Presbyter in 640 testifies that Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) existed and led a movement. That is just eight years after his death:

“For example, an early Syriac source by the Christian writer, Thomas, the Presbyter, dated to around 640CE – that is, just a few years after Prophet Muhammad’s death – provides the earliest mention of Prophet Muhammad and informs us that his followers made a raid around Gaza. This, at least, enables the HISTORIAN TO FEEL MORE CONFIDENT that Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) is not completely a fiction of later pious imagination, as some have implied; WE KNOW THAT SOMEONE NAMED MUHAMMAD DID EXIST, and that he LED some kind of MOVEMENT. And this FACT, in turn, gives us greater confidence that further information in the massive body of traditional Muslim materials may also be rooted in HISTORICAL FACT. The difficulty is in deciding what is, and what is not, factual.” ~ Fred Donner (Professor of Near Eastern History – University of Chicago), Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam, p.53

5. The Qur'an provides direct evidence of Prophet Muhammad. Not only does it mention Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) by name, but it mentions and describes Prophet Muhammad as a prophet and various events in his life and the life of his community. And the scholarly consensus is that the Qur'an as we have it today certainly contains what Prophet Muhammad said and recited in his lifetime:

“Mohammed is also mentioned by name, and identified as a messenger of God, four times in the Qur'an... We can be reasonably sure that the Qur'an is a collection of utterances that he made in the belief that they had been revealed to him by God. The book may not preserve all the messages he claimed to have received, and he is not responsible for the arrangement in which we have them. They were collected after his death – how long after is controversial. But that he uttered all – or most – of them is difficult to doubt.” ~ Patricia Crone (Former Professor of Oriental Studies – University of Cambridge), ‘What Do We Actually Know About Mohammed?’ June 2008

And, yet again:

“For example, meticulous study of the text by generations of scholars has failed to turn up any plausible hint of anachronistic references to important events in the life of the later community, which would almost certainly be there had the text crystallized later than the early seventh century C.E. Moreover, some of the Qur'an's vocabulary suggests that the text, or significant parts of it, hailed from western Arabia. So we seem, after all, to be dealing with a Qur'an that is the product of the earliest stages in the life of the community in western Arabia...The fact that the Qur'an text dates to the earliest phase of the movement inaugurated by Muhammad means that the historian can use it.” ~ Fred Donner (Professor of Near Eastern History – University of Chicago), Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam

6. The Constitution of Madina is preserved in eighth century sources and all scholars accept it as authentic and going back to Muhammad's own lifetime when he ruled over Madinah (Yathrib):

“On the Islamic side, sources dating from the mid-8th century onwards preserve a document drawn up between Mohammed and the inhabitants of Yathrib, which there are good reasons to accept as broadly authentic; Mohammed is also mentioned by name, and identified as a Messenger of God, four times in the Qur'an.” ~ Patricia Crone

(Former Professor of Oriental Studies – University of Cambridge), ‘What Do We Actually Know About Mohammed?’ June 2008

7. Other non-Muslim sources attesting to Muhammad include Christian and Persian writings:

(a) Sebeos, Bishop of the Bagratunis (Writing in 660s CE/ 40s AH)

“Moreover, an Armenian document probably written shortly after 661 identifies him by name and gives a recognisable account of his monotheist preaching.” ~ Patricia Crone (Former Professor of Oriental Studies – University of Cambridge), ‘What Do We Actually Know About Mohammed?’ June 2008

One of the most interesting accounts of the early seventh century comes from Sebeos who was a bishop of the House of Bagratunis. From this chronicle, there are indications that he lived through many of the events he relates. He maintains that the account of Arab conquests derives from the fugitives who had been eyewitnesses thereof. He concludes with Mu’awiya’s ascendancy in the Arab civil war (656-61 CE), which suggests that he was writing soon after this date. Sebeos is the first non-Muslim author to present us with a theory for the rise of Islam that pays attention to what the Muslims themselves thought they were doing (see R. G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam As Others Saw It: A Survey And Evaluation Of Christian, Jewish And Zoroastrian Writings On Early Islam*, 1997, op. cit., p. 128). He says the following about Prophet Muhammad:

“At that time, a certain man from among those same sons of Ismael, whose name was Mahmet [i.e., Muḥammad], a merchant, as if by God’s command, appeared to them as a preacher [and] the Path of Truth. He taught them to recognize the God of Abraham, especially because he was learnt and informed in the history of Moses. Now because the command was from on high, at a single order, they all came together in unity of religion.

“Abandoning their vain cults, they turned to the living God who had appeared to their father Abraham. So, Mahmet legislated for them: not to eat carrion, not to drink wine, not to speak falsely, and not to engage in fornication. He said: ‘With an oath God promised this land to Abraham and his seed after him forever. And he brought about as he promised during that time while he loved Ismael. But now you are the sons of Abraham and God is accomplishing his promise to Abraham and his seed for you. Love sincerely only the God of Abraham, and go and seize the land which God gave to your father Abraham. No one will be able to resist you in battle, because God is with you.’ ~ Bishop Sebeos, (in R. W. Thomson with contributions from J. Howard-Johnson & T. Greenwood), *The Armenian History Attributed to Sebeos Part – I: Translation and Notes*, 1999, *Translated Texts For Historians – Volume 31*, Liverpool University Press, pp. 95-96)

Sebeos was writing the chronicle at a time when memories of sudden eruption of the Arabs were fresh. He knows Muhammad’s name and that he was a merchant by profession. He hints that his life was suddenly changed by a divinely inspired revelation (see R. W. Thomson with contributions from J. Howard-Johnson & T. Greenwood, *The Armenian History Attributed to Sebeos; Part – II: Historical Commentary*, 1999, *Translated Texts for Historians – Volume 31*, Liverpool University Press, p. 238). He presents a good summary of Muhammad’s preaching, i.e., belief in one God, Abraham as a common ancestor of Jews and Arabs. He picks out some of the rules of behaviour imposed on the Ummah; the four prohibitions which are mentioned in the Qur’ān. Much of what he says about the origins of Islam conforms to the Muslim tradition.

(b) A Chronicler of Khuzistan (Writing c. 660s CE/ 40s AH)

This is an anonymous and short Nestorian chronicle that aims to convey Church as well as secular histories from the death of Hormizd, son of Khusrau, to the end of the Persian kingdom. Because of its anonymity, it is known to scholars as the ‘Khuzistan Chronicle,’ after its plausible geographical location or Anonymous Guidi, after the name of its first editor. Amid his entry on the reign of Yazdgird, the chronicler gives a brief account of the Muslim invasions:

“Then God raised up against them the sons of Ishmael, [numerous] as the sand on the sea shore, whose leader (mdabbrānā) was Muḥammad (mhmd). Neither walls nor gates, armour or shield, withstood them, and they gained control over the entire land of the Persians. Yazdgird sent against them countless troops, but the Arabs routed them all and even killed Rustam. Yazdgird shut himself up in the walls of Mahoze and finally escaped by flight. He reached the country of the Huzaye and Mrwnaye, where he ended his life. The Arabs gained control of Mahoze and all the territory.” ~ Chronicler of Khuzistan, (R. G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam As Others Saw It: A Survey And Evaluation Of Christian, Jewish And Zoroastrian Writings On Early Islam*)

Constructing Muhammad: The Politics of Historiography:

An extraordinary aspect of Muhammad's life is that he lived in the full light of history. There are detailed accounts of his life available to us. No comparable religious figure's life and times have been so well recorded as Muhammad's. Muslims over a millennium and a half have performed a rare miracle of revering Muhammad in very profound ways yet jealously preserving his humanity by not falling into the trap of deifying him as God. Yet in spite of all the historical accounts about Muhammad's life that are available to us, we must remember that the Muhammad we know is always the Muhammad we chose to remember. In fact, he is the Muhammad we choose to remember from the historical accounts we read of what his earliest historians chose to remember and report. One of the most striking examples of the different Muhammads that Muslims remember is the difference in prayer rituals of Muslims. Though minor there are several different procedures in which Muslims offer the Muslim prayer and the difference is essentially attributed to what those who prayed with Muhammad remembered. It is possible that Muhammad performed rituals differently at different times, or people remember these rituals differently. The point that I am making is that even in this continuously emulated/imitated aspect of life Muslims remember the Prophet's precedence differently. This is important because Muslims pray in congregation five times a day and have been doing so for over 1400 years and nearly 20 of them with the blessed Prophet himself. This is a living tradition of the Prophet that was never discontinued even for a day in over 1400 years yet there are differing accounts of this practice. In that sense, who Muhammad is, is really the Muhammad we remember and not necessarily who he was. Because his life is a source of law, the writing of his life becomes a legislative process in itself. What we remember determines what laws we have and how we govern. It is therefore natural that the historiography of Muhammad's life should become the site for the construction of intense political narratives. When remembering Muhammad the stakes are much higher than just historical accuracy. How Muhammad is remembered determines how Muslims organize society, what is permissible and what is not, and what roles and rights are assigned to women and what is privileges withheld. Today, Muhammad is remembered by two kinds of peoples, those who hate him and Islam and those who revere him and believe in his divine message.

DID MUHAMMAD KILL JEWS?

Introduction: I wondered what was the real reason so many people in Europe disliked Muslims or simply disapproved of Islam, and I found out that there are many false rumours that are propagated online and in books, where the Muslim prophet Muhammad is often portrayed as a vile man who had allegedly massacred Jews. Many social media influencers tirelessly make thousands of videos and movies against Islamic teachings and falsely accuse the Muslim prophet of being worse than the Nazis.

The Confusion between the Roman siege of Masada and the story of Khaybar:

Due to various versions of history, many scholars have decided to study the history of Jews in Yathrib, and a re-examination of Arab and Jewish traditions seemed to offer differing spectacle.

For many reasons, the episode of the Banu Qurayza incident has had a lot of attention from non-Muslim and secular scholars and apologists. But most of these narratives have either been lacking substance in showing the true picture of the event or the critics of Islam had deliberately misconstrued this historical event in showing the Muslim prophet Muhammad in a bad light for allegedly allowing Saad, a former Jew, to judge those that committed treachery.

It is a well-known historical fact that the Jewish tribes made a pact with Arabs soon after the Muslims who were fleeing persecution from Mecca arrived in Yathrib, which later became known as Medina, and a safe sanctuary to live in. Shortly after the persecuted Muslims arrived and was welcomed in Yathrib, he made a pact with the Jewish tribe Banu Qurayza as well as other tribes that if an enemy were to attack Medina, they would all protect each other and will not aid the enemy in any way. These facts are related to us in a number of early sources:

"To the Jew who follows us belongs help and equality. He shall not be wronged nor shall his enemies be aided. The peace of the believers is invisible. The Jews shall contribute to the cost of war so long as they are fighting alongside the believers. The Jews must bear their expenses and the Muslims their expenses. Each must help the other against anyone who attacks the people of this document. They must seek mutual advice and consultation, and loyalty is a protection against treachery. A man is not liable for his ally's misdeeds. The wronged must be helped. The Jews must pay with the believers so long as war lasts. Yathrib shall be a sanctuary for the people of this document. Quraysh and their helpers shall not be given protection. The contracting parties are bound to help one another against any attack on Yathrib. If they are called to make peace and maintain it, they must do so; and if they make a similar demand on the Muslims, it must be carried out except in the case of a holy war. Every one shall have his portion from the side to which he belongs; the Jews of Aws, their freedmen and themselves have the same standing with the people of this document in pure loyalty from the people of this document."

The first treaty which the Messenger of God concluded with the Jews of Medina took place when he concluded a truce with the Nadir, Qurayza, and Kanuga in Medina, stipulating that they refrain from supporting the pagans and help the Muslims.

The above evidences show that the Arabs and Jews in Medina made a pact that no one will help an enemy against any of them. But some of the Jewish leaders of Banu Qurayza did support the pagans against the Arabs of Medina and this led to several confusing episodes to take place and many versions of massacres to be retold.

The story of the massacre of the Banu Qurayza which took place on April 627 A.D are recorded in various compilations of Arabic literature, and is centred around a Jewish tribe whose chiefs were exiled from their home, and as the last Jewish tribal group in Medina, they received considerable attention from both Muslim biographers of prophet Muhammad, and also secular historians, until the original version of the events became so distorted, that very few people are genuinely aware of what really took place in Yathrib more than fourteen hundred years ago.

According to the widely current tradition, transmitted by the early Muslim scholars of exegesis, and biographers of the Prophet, as well as some Arab jurists and historians, Qurayza were said to have concluded a pact with the Prophet Muhammad in which they committed themselves not to help the enemies of Muhammad. But when the pagan enemies of the Prophet which included the Confederates, Quraysh and their pagan Allies besieged Medina, the Banu Qurayza were found to have aided the forces of the Muhammad's enemies, and Huyayy ben Akhtab, a former leader of the exiled Jewish tribe of the Banu Nazir was blamed for having instigated Ben Asad, the leader of Qurayza, to violate the agreement with the Prophet Muhammad and for having pressed him to negotiate with the leaders of the pagan tribes. The Prophet Muhammad succeeded by stratagem to undermine the mutual confidence between Qurayza and the Ahzab and to spoil their strategic plans against him and against the Muslim community at Medina. The failure of the siege of Medina by the pagan attackers and their disordered and hasty retreat marked a manifest victory for the people of Medina and left Qurayza in a precarious position, facing the forces of the Arab Christians and some Muslims.

The residents of Medina were furious with the Jewish people of Qurayza and wanted to take revenge on them for violating their bargain, but Muhammad, who had a soft spot in his heart for the Jews, begged them to show leniency and forgive them for betraying the Arab population.

However, the people of Medina, though tolerant of Muhammad and his views, did not permit him to give orders or grant him any authority to offer clemency.

Soon, the Arab Muslims, Christians and Zoroastrians of Medina rushed to the Jewish enclave and besieged their fort, trying to overpower the Jews. However, the Muslim prophet still sent word to the Jewish leaders of Qurayza and offered to forgive them and permit them to remain in their quarter of the city, but all his proposals were rejected by the Banu Qurayza.

When the situation deteriorated, the Jewish leaders of Qurayza sent their messenger to negotiate with the Muhammad with the terms of their surrender. They proposed to surrender only to one of their own dear friends and selected Saad ben Muaz for the task. All the Jews of Qurayza gave their word that only the judgement of Saad would be accepted by them and subsequently, they descended from their stronghold and were led to Saad's town.

Here, the historians varied in their claims and some mention that the men were put in a court in Medina; and the people of Aus, who were allies of Qurayza, prepared to pass judgement on them.

The Jews expected Saad to show leniency towards their allies, the Qurayza. When all the parties agreed to abide by the judgment of Saad, he gave his concise verdict: the nine men who had kidnapped several women from the other Arab tribes and committed high treason were to be put to death, while the rest of the men along with their women and children, had the choice of either remaining in Medina or take their movable properties and leave the town.

This incident ended there without much uproar, as it was common for murderers and rapists to be put to death by official beheadings or judicial executions, which were carried out in accordance with the Jewish religious laws from the Torah, but many years after Muhammad's death, another bloody version of this incident began to appear, and were even retold by the Jews of Banu Qurayza who had continued to live peacefully in Medina.

The rumour which are outspread until this day states that somehow, the man Saad had decreed that all men of Banu Qurayza were to be executed and their women and children were to be sold into slavery. Some narrations report that the Muslim Prophet allegedly ratified the judgment and stated that Saad's decree had been issued as a decree of God pronounced from above the 'Seven Heavens' above. Accordingly, some 400 or 600, or according more popular narrations, 700, or 800, or even 900 men from the Qurayza tribe were led to the market of Medina and the men were executed and buried in the trenches. It is also said in some wild narrations that the Muslim prophet even attended the executions, which were carried out by Saad or Zubayr. And without any references or documentation, some historians also added that the women and children of that tribe were sold into slavery and a number of them were distributed as gifts the people of Yathrib.

However, this story poses several firm complications. Everything mentioned in the story is contrary to all Islamic laws, such as enslaving people and executing unarmed men. Killing prisoners of war was strictly prohibited in Islam, so it is obvious that no such mass executions could have taken place in the presence of any Muslim men or women. Historically, there is no evidence that the Jewish women and children were enslaved, as slavery itself was forbidden in the Islamic religion, and Muhammad and his family personally freed more than forty thousand slaves of that era.

The story of the alleged massacre of Qurayza was sparingly studied and analysed by several non-Muslim scholars, who severely criticised the Muslim Prophet for the incident. Although not unanimous in their assessment of many details of the story, the Western scholars were in agreement concerning the cruelty of the judgment of Saad, who was believed to be non-Muslim, with some traditions suggesting that Saad had converted to the Islamic religion merely minutes or perhaps one hour before his death. His religion prior to this is unknown, but there is no doubt that the Jews considered him as one of their own.

Some Muslim scholars do not deny the merciless character of Saad's judgment, but try to justify it by pointing out that the Jews of Qurayza had yielded to the treacherous activities of the pagans and had committed not only deeds of treason but those nine men who were executed were guilty of murder and several were guilty of kidnapping and rapes. Other historians suggest that Saad's decree, although severe and harsh, was a vital necessity as he regarded the fate of the Jews as a question of life and death for the non-Jewish community of Yathrib.

The responsibility for the killing of the men were placed solely on Saad, but there is no question that if such killing had taken place, the massacre of the tribe was indeed a barbarous deed which cannot be justified by any reason of political necessity, because the indiscriminate slaughter of the whole tribe cannot be recognized other than as an act of monstrous cruelty. Historians falsely accused the Muslim prophet for being responsible for the alleged massacre and they accused Muhammad of having a savage and inhuman character.

It has to be noted that one of the sources of the cruel version of the story was narrated by Ibn Isaac, a man who was known to have propagated numerous questionable stories about Muslims. Some historians believe Ibn Isaac was a Jew, while others suspect that he may have been a Christian, who briefly posed as a Muslim in order to spread his gossips. The man succeeded in gaining the trust of many Muslims, and the version of Qurayza as recorded by Ibn Isaac was transmitted by later Muslim scholars, historians and biographers of the Prophet.

Several Muslim historians knew that Ibn Isaac was a questionable source and had tried to prove the unreliability of Ibn Isaac's account of the events of the alleged massacre of Qurayza. Upon studying the man's biography, they

discovered that Ibn Isaac died nearly 150 years after the events of Qurayza took place, and he claims to be a first-person eye-witness in some of the narrations, which was an impossibility. Other historians criticised the method by which Ibn Isaac collected his information. They were able to prove that his sources were untrustworthy, uncertain and late.

Malik Ben Anas, who was a known authority in Arab history had once called Ibn Isaac a fraud, saying 'he was a liar'. Ben Anas also called Ibn Isaac 'an impostor', suggesting that the man may have faked being a Muslim for a brief period in order to instil false narrations about Muslims and spreading violent rumours. Another critic said Ibn Isaac was a man who 'transmits his stories from the Jews'.

Hundreds of jurists and historians later confirmed that Ibn Isaac's story was false and he never saw nor heard of any massacre taking place in Medina. Indeed, the concocted version of the event gained popularity among the non-Muslims, especially some of the Jews in Medina, who were upset to find themselves ostracised from the Arab communities due to their past treacheries.

All Islamic scholars agree that it is impossible for all the men of Qurayza to be executed; according to the rule of Islam, only those responsible for high treason, murder, rape or violent sedition were to be punished but killing a large number of people is wholly opposed to the Islamic sense of justice and the Koranic rule regarding prisoners. It makes no sense that the Qurayza would have been slaughtered, while other Jewish groups which surrendered both before and after the Banu Qurayza were treated leniently and were allowed to remain in Medina or leave with their properties.

Historians also point out that if so many hundreds of people were indeed put to death in the market-place and trenches were dug for the operation, why is there no trace of all that and no sign or word to point to the place? Had this slaughter actually happened, the jurists of Muslims would have adopted it as a precedent but in fact, exactly the opposite had been the case.

There is a popular incident in Arab history which mentions a man named Khalid, the son of Walid. Believed to have been born from a Roman captive, Khalid grew up to be vengeful but brave man, and with his half-Arab ancestry, he gained a prestigious position among the pagans as a military officer and even tried to kill the Muslim prophet Muhammad many times. Ultimately, when he had no place to escape, and all his pagan friends abandoned him, he decided to gain favour from Muhammad by offering his military services. However, Muhammad disliked all forms of battles and forbade Khalid to fight, and dispatched Khalid, along with several other Muslims, to local villagers to recently converted to Islam.

When Khalid arrived at the village, he recognised a man who had killed his uncle many years ago, and he immediately tied the man's hand and executed him. His Muslim comrades were horrified by Khalid's extra-judicial murder, and they ran back to their prophet Muhammad and complained about Khalid and reported how he executed a man in cold blood. Upon hearing this, Muhammad is said to have burst into tears, and raised his hands to heaven in prayer and beseeched the heavenly God to forgive him for Khalid's crimes. The idea the Khalid had killed a man in cold blood made Muhammad weep incessantly for many days, and he repeatedly said, "O Allah, I am free of what Khalid did." This incident showed that Muhammad had no actual judicial power in Medina, as he was a highest in this Christian and Jewish city, and but somehow many false narrations about Muhammad's alleged wars have been retold, but in reality, he never sent anyone to kill or wage any holy or unholy war, but those tribal people in Medina often took revenge on each other and hunted down and killed former foes on their own volition, without the knowledge or approval of Muhammad, the way Khalid killed a man who was his former enemy. These stories later caused some people to accuse Muhammad of being cruel, but according to Muslim Shiite narrations, Khalid was always a pagan and merely pretended to be Muslims for several years to gain monetary benefits, and therefore, his murders and assault cases number in the dozens, and Muhammad himself sought refuge unto God from Khalid's misdeeds.

A question many critics ask is that if the massacre of Jews in Yathrib never took place, how did this narrative ever gain momentum?

Many Islamic scholars believe that some details of the massacre story had come from the Jews themselves. There were thousands of descendants of the Banu Qurayza living in Medina, proving that they were neither killed nor executed nor were they ever sold into slavery, as the false stories claims, and soon, the descendants of those Jewish people were eager to glorify their ancestors, and began to make up stories about how their parents were oppressed by the Arab tribes.

To be fair, it was not only the Jews who made up these stories, but also several of the descendants of the arbiter Saad who wanted to make their grandfather look heroic, began to add false quotes and details. When Saad passed the death penalty over the nine of the Jewish leaders who instigated a rebellion and kidnapped some of their children as hostages, the Jewish community at large were satisfied with the verdict and they too accepted the death sentence as a legitimate punishment for attempted rape, sedition or murder according to Jewish laws found in Deuteronomy. However, the Muslim prophet Muhammad had disapproved of Saad's judgement at that time, chiefly because he was extremely fond of Jews, and had hoped to be the arbiter so he could forgive them, the way he had forgiven the excesses of all the other Jewish tribes who had previously betrayed him and his family, including forgiving several Jewish women and men who had poisoned him. But the Jews refused to accept Muhammad as their judge, preferring the unreliable character of Saad, whose religion was unknown.

However, when the Muslim prophet burst into tears upon hearing that Saad had nine Jewish men executed, some Muslims expressed disappointment at Saad's hasty decision and criticised him for making a decision without consulting with their prophet who still lived amongst them, with some Arabs even branding him a non-Muslim or a hypocrite. It was at this time that Saad's grandchildren and other descendants started to glorify the actions of their grandfather and attempted in vain to portray him as a hero, and used fabricated tales to justify Saad's actions, such as adding fake quotation of the Muslim prophet to make it look as though Saad was acting at his behest. One of the false traditions that Saad's family members later publicised was the alleged saying of the prophet after Saad had nine men executed. Transmitted by unreliable sources, it is said that after the judgment of Saad, the Prophet allegedly said to Saad: "You have pronounced God's judgment upon them as inspired through Seven Veils."

This was an impossibility because historically, it can be proven that Muhammad was not present when Saad had those nine Jewish criminals executed. There is no doubt that Muhammad's intense affection for Jews would have made him physically put a stop to Saad's actions. It can also be proven that Saad was mortally wounded and died soon after passing his brutal verdict and he had never spoken or interacted with the Muslim prophet. Whether he was an adherent of Islam is also questionable, but some sources say he had technically converted to the Muslim religion merely hours before his death, but there are no conclusive evidences of that.

How many people were killed in the Khaybar fiasco?

According to all reliable Arab sources, nine Jewish instigators were put on trial for attempted rape, murder, kidnapping and illegal enslavement, and most importantly, sedition and treason, and they were judged according to the laws of the Old Testament and were subsequently sentenced to death.

The Jews from other tribes were present at the trial and they approved of the sentence and agreed to execute those nine criminals who had tarnished their image and ruined their peaceful coexistence with the Muslims of Medina.

However, like many myths and legends which have been carried over the years, the number of Jews who were killed in Yathrib changed with each passing century. Nearly one hundred and fifty years after the incident, some of the Jewish residents of Medina who were the descendant of those nine men decided to add other narratives, elongating the details of the trial, and some even tried to paint the execution as a massacre, even though scores of executions took place annually in seventh century Arabia, mostly to avenge rape or murder. The incident with the Jews in Khaybar were no different from an ordinary trial and sentencing, but some Jews were falsely led to believe that nine of their ancestors were massacred. Five years later, the number of dead miraculously increased to several hundreds. Other fabricated traditions appeared without any chain of narrations, and those stories claimed that six or seven hundred Jews were killed by the order of a man named Saad, although the actual beheading were carried out by fellow Jews who were eager to mete out justified Biblical justice to their comrades. Finally, the story became so popular that it underwent an overhaul once more, and the most popular version of the Khaybar incident was born. It

was believed that approximately nine hundred Jewish men were massacred for no obvious reason, and their wives and children were allegedly sold into slavery. Although it had no truth in it, this narrative remains the most popular even today, but some Arab theologian raised the question about this story and asked how could nine hundred people be incarcerated in a house belonging to a woman of the Banu Najjar, when it was a known historical fact that the convicts from the Jewish tribe were housed in a woman's small lodging for several days, as their trial progressed? It was a technical impossibility for nine hundred men to fit in the small mud house of that woman. Other critics have pointed out the fact that many Jews are mentioned as remaining in Medina after the alleged expulsion of all the Jewish tribes, so if they were all killed or enslaved, how could the community have survived?

Another question which haunts many historians are the intricate details of this story. According to some scholars, several Jews who spoke with the questionable writer Ibn Isaac, admitted on several occasions that after the siege of Khaybar, they were reminded of another siege which their ancestors had faced in the hands of the Romans during 73 CE. It is believed that some Jews may have adopted this story from past experiences such as the incidents during the siege of Masada, where the final episodes of the first Jewish-Roman war occurred.

The incidents of the Jews in Khaybar and the fate of the people in Qurayza were different from the brutal events which took place at the hands of the Romans in Masada, but the descendants of the Jews who fled to Arabia after the Jewish-Roman wars many have decided to revive old tales to gain sympathy.

What was the siege of Masada?

The siege of Masada was a documented historical event recorded by Roman-Jewish historian Flavius Josephus during the Jewish-Roman Wars. The siege occurred between 73 and 74 CE, after the fall of Jerusalem. Historians agree that the siege of Masada was a pivotal event in the First Jewish-Roman War because it brought an end to the first revolt by the Jewish people against the Roman Empire in Roman-controlled Judea. Prior to the siege, a group of Jewish rebels overtook the Roman garrison of Masada and soon after, the Roman army laid a brutal siege to the fortification which lasted seven months. During this time, the Romans built ramps to breach the isolated fortification and stormed into the fort and ended the rebellions. The ruins of the ancient Masada fortress which was situated on the top of a rocky plateau on the eastern end of the Judean Desert, still exist to this day, and the number of people who were killed, or died by suicide to avoid capture, was numbered at approximately nine hundred, similar to the narrative of Banu Qurayza, where Jewish stories claim that nine hundred Jewish men were massacred or were made to execute one another after Arabs of Medina breached their fortifications in Khaybar.

The Jewish rebellion began after a Roman local leader, Gessius Florus, stole all the treasures from Jewish temple of Jerusalem and murdered hundreds of Jewish people who dared to speak against his actions. Between 64 and 66 CE, this Roman procurator continued to oppress the Jews, causing tensions to boil over in Judea. According to the historian Josephus, riots broke out in Jerusalem and random attacks and riots began to occur. To quell the rioting, Gessius Florus ordered Roman troops to breach the Jewish Temple. This led to more unrest and massive rioting throughout the city. The Roman procurator then ordered his troops to raid Jerusalem and arrest all Jewish leaders who along with other Jewish citizens were subsequently whipped and crucified.

After the outbreak of riots and violence, several Jewish factions merged to form an extremist branch called the Zealots, who objected to Roman rule and used violence to obtain their goals. The historian Josephus wrote that these Zealot Jews were more fanatical with their activities, going as far as murdering other Jews who they considered Roman collaborators.

In the Talmud, the Zealots are described as impious, because instead of seeking peace treaties, the Zealots were aggressive. In 67 CE, Roman Emperor Nero sent General Vespasian to crush the uprising in Galilee and the leader of the Zealots escaped Galilee and fled to Jerusalem. During the revolt, the Jewish Zealots overtook Jerusalem and executed all those who wanted to surrender to the Romans.

A large legion of Roman army arrived outside of Jerusalem toward the start of 70 CE and began its siege of the city. The Roman-Jewish historian Josephus recorded that the siege and wrote that the subsequent fighting eventually led to the destruction of the Temple. Roman soldiers tossed burning sticks onto a wall of the Temple, causing the city to

be destroyed. The historian Josephus also claimed that the Roman siege resulted in the deaths of over one million people.

In 72 CE, the Roman governor of Judaea ordered the siege of Masada to eliminate the last remnants of the Great Revolt. At the time, 960 Jewish rebels were living in the Masada fortifications. Flavius Silva led about 8000 fighting men to the area and the Roman legion surrounded the plateau and built many camps and a large circumvallation wall. When the Romans finally breached the fortress, they discovered only a handful of survivors out of the 960 men and women who were believed to be inside Masada.

After the Jewish Zealots saw that they were trapped inside the fortress, they realised that the insurrection against the Roman Empire had failed, and they had nowhere to run.

The Zealots decided that it was by the will of God that they were to die on the mountain. Instead of becoming slaves, they chose to die. As religious laws of Judaism prohibited the act of suicide, the Zealots killed each other.

The account of what happened at Masada comes from several women and children who survived the mass killing by hiding inside a cistern. According to Josephus and based on testimony from the last Masada survivors, Eleazar ben Yai'ir, the leader of the Jewish Zealots, commanded the remaining rebels to destroy everything in Masada except the foodstuffs. By leaving the food and storehouses, he wanted to show the Romans that they chose death over slavery.

After the siege of Masada, the Romans had eliminated the last of the rebels and brought an end to the First Jewish-Roman War but the war caused untold suffering to the Jewish people with the Romans capturing and enslaving more than 100,000 people. In addition to this, over a million people were killed during the siege of Jerusalem, but the crux of the siege was the Romans storming in the Jewish fortress and trying to execute the 900 odd men who were holed up there, but they only found them all dead, as they had killed one another to avoid being charged with treason or punished by the Romans for sedition.

The massive number of deaths and the destruction of the Temple marked a turning point in the history of the Jewish people, and according to some modern historians, the incident at Masada remains a subject of debate because the only written record of the story came from the historian Josephus who wrote that those nine hundred Jews killed each other to avoid enslavement. The man Josephus was later granted Roman citizenship by the future Emperor and continued to live in Rome under the patronage of the rulers who executed thousands of fellow Jews.

Many of the Jews who survived migrated from Masada and made a new home in Yathrib, which became known as Medina, or the city of the Muslim prophet, and it was here that those Jews lived peacefully alongside their Medinan Arab and Christian brethren for hundreds of years, until the arrival of the Muslim prophet Muhammad.

Some historians had drawn a comparison between the story of Masada as recorded by Josephus Flavius and the story of the Banu Qurayza as narrated by unverified Jewish sources who, only after 150 years after the incident took place, propagated the tale of an alleged massacre of nine hundred men, similar to the killings of the Masada fort. It is possible that the descendants of the Jews who fled to Arabia after the Jewish-Roman wars superimposed details of the siege of Masada on the story of the siege of the Banu Qurayza, either due to genuine miscarriage of memory, or a deliberate mixture of the two incidents to provide the basis for Ibn Isaac's story.

Numerous historians have studied that data about the events surrounding the alleged massacre of Banu Qurayza and they also re-examined certain traditions and analysed and re-assessed many of the narrations which are widely repeated by both Jewish writers and Muslim scholars, who somehow believed in the Jewish narrative and began to hopelessly justify the execution of the criminals of Banu Qurayza.

All Muslim scholars agreed however, that the data of the story of Qurayza stand in contradiction to all Muslim rules, and violates all Muslim law, and is against the norms of Muslim justice and Koranic principles.

The rule in Islam is to punish only those who are responsible for sedition, murder or sexual assault, and killing such a large number of people was diametrically opposed to the Islamic sense of justice and to the basic principles laid

down in their Koran. Muslim scholars also insist that the slaughter of prisoners is against the Koranic rule which orders that they either be granted their freedom or else be allowed to be ransomed by paying bail money, and had this alleged slaughter of the unarmed men actually happened, Muslim jurists would have seriously debated over this tragedy and some may have adopted it as a precedent, but in reality, exactly the opposite has happened.

There are many other incidents surrounding the alleged Jewish massacre that proves convincingly that the reports about Saad's judgment, its alleged approval by the Muslim Prophet and the cruel massacre of hundreds of men of Banu Qurayza are all fictitious, because no Muslim jurist could have based his judgment on an account totally alien to the spirit of Muslim law and contrary to Muslim justice and Arab ethics.

Nearly all reliable Muslim jurists are well acquainted with the real story of the Banu Qurayza and some have analysed the case of their treachery, defined the nature of their mischievous actions, assessed the character of the transgression committed by some Jews among them and elucidated the problem of individual and collective punishment, concluding that never have innocent or unarmed men been executed in the Islamic history, and it was severely prohibited to hurt a captured person.

The Muslim prophet gave strict order never to kill fighting men after they surrendered and never to enslave their progeny or take their property as booty, whether they be in the Muslim lands or in the territory of the enemy. In the case of the Banu Qurayza, the Arabs of Medina had concluded with the Jewish leader, an agreement of reconciliation on the basis of a truce and their leader violated it and kidnapped the women and children from other Arab communities and held them as hostages.

According to the judgment of jurists, the Muslim law enjoins punishing only people who were directly responsible for breaking sacred laws, but those who merely remain passive in the territory occupied by the transgressors are to be left unmolested and unharmed. No captive can ever be put to death by the order of a commander or Imam, no matter how powerful he may be, so in the case of Saad, it is a legal impossibility for him to carry out a mass murder with the knowledge of either Muhammad or any of his Muslim friends.

It is known that the Jews of Banu Qurayza who surrendered enjoyed the status of prisoners of war, so killing them was out of the question; yet, legend goes that after the judgment of Saad where he allegedly decreed that all those who reached puberty were to be killed, as reported in the biography of Ibn Isaac, the Muslim prophet reportedly said: This is God's judgment issued from above the seven heavens. The descendants and sympathisers of Saad were earnest in spreading this fake narration by giving a false quote of Muhammad to prove to the Muslims that the alleged slaughter of the Banu Qurayza and the execution of the nine criminals among them who had reached puberty was carried out according to the order of God revealed to their very own Prophet, although never had the prophet claimed that a judgement was directly from God above the seven heavens, even the decrees he passed himself.

The report about the presence of the Prophet Muhammad at the execution of the captives of Qurayza has also been one of the most thorough fabrications, and was only reported by another questionable character called Ibn Hazm. Among the many allegations against Ibn Hazm was one of adultery and larceny, and most scholars rejected his testimonies and did not consider him a devout believer. Many Muslim jurists claim that Ibn Hazm was a Christian who purposefully spread several false narrations about the Muslim prophet, because they knew it was impossible that people could have been killed in the presence of the Prophet, while he would not know whether the execution was right or not or would not have put a stop to it.

Renowned Arab historians also reject the story of the massacre of Banu Qurayza by arguing that it was highly unlikely that the Banu Qurayza should be slaughtered when the other Jewish groups who surrendered before Banu Qurayza and after them were treated leniently and allowed to go.

Like the Jews of Nazir tribe, the Jewish people of Qurayza were dear to the Muslim prophet, so he neither confiscated their possession nor seized their estates. Although some of the chiefs of Qurayza had strong hatred in their hearts towards the Arabs and even despised the Muslim's Prophet, their fate did not differ from that of their brethren and they were offered unconditional clemency by the man who loved the Jews like his blood relatives. Indeed, many Muslim scholars believe that it was Muhammad's Jewish family members from his mother's side which caused him to be unnaturally gentle and lenient towards them. The Muslim prophet was awash with self-

respect and strictly forbade his followers to rise when he approached them, but the sight of an ordinary Jew passing at a distance would change his demeanour and he would rush to his feet to honour the man.

Once during a religious sermon, Prophet Muhammad was busy teaching his disciples the methodology of praying and fasting, when the funeral of a Jewish boy was passing by the door of the mosque, and upon seeing the funeral procession, Muhammad became visibly emotional and got to his feet, and remained standing until the procession had completely passed.

Several of the Arabs who were seated around him huffed in rage, and one even cried out, "O Messenger of Allah! Why do you stand in honour of a dead Jewish boy?"

Weeping in sympathy for the dead Jew, the Muslim prophet responded, "Is he not a soul?"

"But it is only a dirty Jew who has died!" One irritated Arab cried out.

This word caused the colour of Muhammad's face to change, and his cheeks reddened in dislike as he warned his countrymen never to speak ill of any Jew.

Such was his affection and respect for every ordinary Jew, so it is inconceivable that Muhammad would ever give the order to execute unarmed Jewish men, or allow any of his followers to execute them.

The logical explanation for the slander of massacre at the Siege of Khaybar is likely the siege of Masada, whose story had been passed down for generations, until some Jews were genuinely confused between the two incidents and happened to accidentally mix up the two narratives. In every aspect of his life, the Prophet was lenient towards Jewish tribes, groups and clans and when the Arabs conquered Khaybar, he promised the Jews of this locality total safety and indicated to all the surrounding Jews that in spite of the hostility of their clans, he would grant them safety, as he had granted their brethren, if they would cease fighting.

Despite Muhammad's love for the Jews, some dishonest writers continued to spread false reports about his allegedly cruel interactions with the Jews, and one of the scandals was about another Jewish tribe named Banu Huqqa, who were wealthy and had many hidden treasures.

Fabricated narrations also claim that Muhammad tried to loot them and then ordered to torture one of the sons of Huqqa and to kill the others to locate their treasures and the story also mentions that all the women and children of the executed sons of Huqqa were enslaved, and their property confiscated. Some outlandish reports also state that the Arab prophet ordered Huqqa to be tortured and put to death and captured the executed man's wife Sophia and married on the night of her husband's execution. Even though none of these allegations were true, hundreds of people repeated these strange stories and used it to spread hate and rage against the Muslim prophet Muhammad, a man whose mother Ameena, hailed from a Jewish clan in Yathrib and who loved them more than life itself.

It is interesting to see that while the grievance against Muslims is many, most people in Muslim nations regard us in high esteem, and seldom would one ever hear a Muslim speaking ill of their White or Christian peers for they seem to have inherited their prophet's compassion for the Jews and Christians, as he called the people of the book. Indeed, no medieval Muslim thinker of any note ever wrote a book against Judaism, or penned homilies and articles against Christianity. If medieval Islam had a severe agenda against other faiths, it was more likely to be Zoroastrianism and paganism than Judaism, which, in Samuel Goitein's phrase by which he summed up his magisterial work, enjoyed a close and 'symbiotic' relationship with Islam. Modern mercenaries have purged Midrashic material from Koranic commentary, and like the studies the Tsarist forgery The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion, and, even, Mein Kampf, the Koran and its adherents have been deemed unreliable by those who refuse to engage in an objective discussion. This importation into an extensively nativist and xenophobic milieu becomes inescapable and becomes the fundamentalist mercenary's familiar appeal to necessity.

There was never any legal basis for torture, execution or the confiscation of the property of the enemy in Islam and this rule is plainly outlined in the earliest compilations of Muslim laws. The killing of captured fighting men of the enemy has always been explicitly forbidden and no prisoner were ever put to death on the order of the Arab Prophet after they had been captured and after hostilities had ceased and Muhammad always gave special instructions to alleviate the suffering of the captured by providing them with food and water; in the aftermath of battles, the Muslim Prophet ordered that the captives be provided with dates and be allowed to rest at mid-day. In the case of the Banu Qurayza, many Muslim scholars accuse both the descendants of Saad and the descendants of the Jews who

converted to Islam, of inventing tendentious traditions transmitted and recorded by Ibn Isaac. Their main the criticism of Ibn Isaac was that he took material only from Jews and Christians, causing an attitude of suspicion towards such sources to prevail. Rigorous Muslim scholars of jurisprudence and traditions, who usually display a highly critical attitude, had a very low opinion of Ibn Isaac, and complained that he lacked substance. The leading scholars of prophetic traditions also rejects the authenticity of the alleged quotation of the Prophet where he appears to approve of a non-existent massacre carried out by a man named Saad. Recently, archaeologists have tried to locate the place of the alleged massacre and they exhumed every known location where the Jews may have been buried, but no sign of any execution or massacre was ever found, leading some to suspect that the entire rumour about the Khaybar massacre may have been concocted.

The Bias against Islam:

Each year, hundreds of books are written by people who seek to earn money by smearing the honourable name of the Church. One such popular case took place in 2005, where an Irish woman released her book, *Kathy's Story: The True Story of a Childhood Hell Inside the Magdalen Laundries*. In her book, the woman chronicled many details of the mind-numbing and torturous abuse she allegedly endured over several years at Ireland's famed Catholic institutions that cared for young women.

After enduring harrowing abuse by her father, she claimed that she was placed in the care of The Sisters of Our Lady of Charity at age 12 at a Magdalene laundry. She then chronicled atrocious and persistent abuse. With frightening detail, she described how the nuns at the laundries repeatedly brutalized her. The woman wrote that one particular beating broke her pelvis, and at another time, a priest raped her causing her to give birth to a child at the age of 13. In her book, the woman said she was constantly abused at the Catholic school, both sexually and physically. However, the woman's family members later apologized to the Church for her lies, because she had never even attended the Catholic institution where she said she was raped. Later, evidence was uncovered that proved that priests never raped the young woman, and nor did any priest ever impregnate her. Similar false biographies are increasingly common with respect to the Muslim' religion, where hundreds of ex-Muslims who are keen to malign their former faith, write imaginary stories of horrific abuse which they allegedly endured at the hands of their Muslims captors, or husbands. However, most of those books were proven to be works of hired people, host writers or individuals who have a vendetta against Muhammad and his religion.

It is ironic that Muslim communities who adhere to the teaching of Muhammad, had made great contributions to serving the poor, and for hundreds of years, defended human rights, abolished slavery and women's oppression, but they are also accused of being bigots, and endless smear campaign against the Islamic religion is as prevalent as it is against the Catholic Church, which has been delivering therapy, healthcare, and are still providing education in scales that are unparalleled in history.

If one depended on the media for their news, they would never know what these religions actually teach. If we were to believe what our television, newspapers, and the Internet constantly spew, then we would have no choice but to conclude that the Church is an ancient cult that harbours molester and fosters paedophiles, just as the way many media outlets, films and novels are released each year, trying to portray Islam as a violent religion, by highlighting cases from obscure and often non-existent terror groups in the Middle East or Africa. If we were to follow the coverage of the popular news channels, then we could conclude that perverted Catholic priests are lurking everywhere with the sole purpose of raping every little boy they can get their hands, but the reality is that these chaste priests who live with promises of abstinence, poverty and obedience, are the most ardent protectors of children.

Why the controversy? However, amongst the nearly two billion Muslim population, if one man commits murder or rape or any other crime, automatically the whole world starts chanting that Muslims are terrorists, and every single media, every blockbuster movie and every single novel begin to portray Muslims as terrorists and call for the ban of the religion and encourage the desecration of their holy book.

This hatred against the Muslim people did not exist in Europe, Britain or North America until a hundred years ago, which proves that by nature, White people have been amiable and friendly to Muslim nations. In Britain, hundreds of scholars and academics spoke glowingly about Islam and the holy Koran was considered to be a work of the finest literature, which men like Rodwell and George Sale had translated since 1600. Far from desecrating the Koran or draw image of cartoons like deranged children, the White race was remarkably civil to all Muslims prior to the arrival of the immigrants into our continent.

Sir Bernard Shaw said in 1936, that, "I have always held the religion of Muhammad in high estimation because of its wonderful vitality. It is the only religion, which appears to me to possess that assimilation capacity to the changing phase of existence, which can make itself appeal in every age. I have studied him (Muhammad) - the wonderful man and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the saviour of humanity. I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness: I have prophesized about the faith in Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe today."

A Hindu professor, Ramakrishna Rao, explained his opinion about Muhammad, by saying, Muhammad was a model for human life. "The personality of Muhammad, it is most difficult to get into the whole truth of it. Only a glimpse of it can I catch. What a dramatic succession of picturesque scenes! There is Muhammad, the Prophet. There is Muhammad, the Warrior, Muhammad, the Businessman; Muhammad, the Statesman; Muhammad, the Orator; Muhammad, the Reformer; Muhammad, the Protector of Slaves; Muhammad, the Emancipator of Women; Muhammad, the Judge; Muhammad, the Saint. All in all, these magnificent roles, in all these departments of human activities, he is like a hero."

The most telling remarks about the Islamic religion in modern times came from Michael H. who ranked the Muslim prophet Muhammad, at the top of his hundred most Influential Persons in the History. In 1978, he stated, "My choice of Muhammad to lead the list of world's most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by others, but he was the only man in the history who was supremely successful on both the secular and religious level. It is probable that the relative influence of Islam has been larger than the combined influence of Jesus Christ and St. Paul on Christianity. It is this unparalleled combination of the secular and religious influence which I feel entitles Muhammad to be considered to be the most influential single figure in human history."

The intellectual, Sir Bernard Shaw, when discussing the merits of the Muslim prophet Muhammad, said, "He was by far the most remarkable man that ever set foot on this earth. He preached a religion, founded a state, built a nation, laid down a moral code, initiated numerous social and political reforms, established a powerful and dynamic society to practice and represent his teachings and completely revolutionized the worlds of human thought and behaviour for all times to come."

Muslims are being tortured and persecuted for their faith more than any other people of other faiths, yet the whole world hates them so desperately that some haters give out a vibe that they might want to kill every single Muslim in the world. It is indeed unfortunate, because our world would have been safer if people would not have been so obsessed with hating Arabs and Muslims, and if we could all understand that they are just normal human beings like us, and they are not monsters or rabid dogs. Today, Russians are being framed for various crimes, and their nation is demonised as well. Similar efforts to demonise the Islamic religion was attempted many times in the past, such as the Batinah group in nearly a thousand years ago, when Islam was a young religion. Muslims were framed by the Batinah group who declared themselves to be Muslim Caliphs and carried out gruesome crimes like the present-day ISIS. The fake Caliph of Batinah group declared himself to be a devout Muslim, but surprisingly banned pilgrimages to Mecca for 22 years, and although Islam forbids worshipping anything or anyone other than God, he ordered Muslims to worship fire and hired hundreds of mercenaries to attack all Muslim pilgrims who tried to perform yearly pilgrimage to commemorate Abraham's journey. Finally, the terrorist Caliph did not bother to hide his true self and directly invaded Mecca and plundered the Muslim holy places and stole all religious relics, including the stone of Abraham from their sacred Ka'ba, all the while claiming his team was an Islamic team. However, most Muslims at that time knew that he was an imposter and did everything contradictory to the tenets of Islam. Although Batinah manifested itself a thousand years ago, they carried out crimes in the name of Islam and in recent years, the terrorist group ISIS once again declared themselves a Caliph and is also perpetuating genocide and rape in the name Islam and even turned many of the Iraqi and Syrian mosques into brothels. It is obvious that none of the ISIS members or leaders are Muslims because no true Muslim would convert their mosques into brothels as no real Christian would dream of converting the altar of church into a prostitution house, but the ISIS regularly use Koran

verses and prophet's symbols to convince people they are Muslims. There had been terrorists' groups framing Muslims and doing crimes forever, and of course, they will call themselves Muslims, even though it is astonishing that they kill and enslave mostly Muslim men and women and even execute children.

Civilisation demands that we refrain from forming generalised opinions, because like the Jews who were being persecuted during World War Two, the majority of Muslims are just normal civilians who are not invading and killing and robbing the people of other faiths. One might wonder, then why so much hate for Muslims? Why the obsession with their religion? This has to do chiefly with some media outlets who are controlled by an irreligious, anti-White godless mentality and seeks to eradicate the idea of universal creator from the mainstream dialogue. This secular and anti-White agenda pushed forward by the media ultimately has only one objective: to eradicate religion, and particularly Christianity from the face of earth, and thus, this very same media is always tirelessly reporting thousands of false sexual abuse allegations against Christian clergy and Catholic priests, in order to undermine their credibility and portray the Christian faith in a negative light.

When will be able to treat everyone as human beings and not be obsessed with whatever faith and whatever god they decide to worship? If someone commits a crime, justice demands that we punish them. Civil behaviour demands that we do not drag their religion in, we do not drag their country in, we do not drag their ethnicity in, and we do not drag their social status in. If a crime takes place, accuse the criminal and mete out clean justice, but to say every Christian commits that crime merely because a Christian man did it is absurd and irresponsible.

STATUS OF WOMEN IN ISLAM:

Rights and Status of Women Prior to the Advent of Islam:

In the pagan society of pre-Islamic Arabia the status of women was like slaves who had no rights and dignity. Women would not get share either from parents or spouse as inheritance. But Islam ensures share of women in the property of parents and husband (Rahman, 2008). Regular shape of marriage as we understand at present time was totally absent. There were such types of marriage as may be treated as fornication, prostitution, adultery or polyandry (Faiz-ud-din, 2008). Men could marry any number as he like and there were no specific rules in regard to marriage, they could marry even two real sisters at one and at the same time (Rashid, 2004). But in case of marriage, Islam imposes prohibition on account of affinity (prohibition due to marriage relationship). In this respect the Holy Qur'an declares: "Forbidden for you (to marry) are the mothers of your wives and your step-daughters that are in your laps (in charge of you) through your wives to whom you have gone in; but if you have not gone in to them, then there is no sin upon you (to marry them); and the wives of your sons whom you have begotten." (4: 23). Husband possessed the power of divorce which was so unlimited and unrestricted that he could divorce his wife whenever he wishes without any lawful ground and could revoke his divorce and divorce again as many times as he favoured. He could illogically accuse his wife of falseness, dismiss her and leave her with such infamy as would prevent other suitors; while he himself would go free from any kinds of liability of maintenance or legal punishment. Neither of the wives could get a dower but Islam approves dower as a respect to the wife (Faiz-ud-din, 2003). False charges of unchastely were frequently used for depriving the wife from her right of dower. Her protector could deliver her to any person as he wished. But showing respect to women Islam reformed marriage laws in a sweeping and far-reaching way.

Women were considered as material things and where husband were unable to pay his debt during his life time, after his death his creditor would own his wife as reparation (Saifee, Baloach, Sultan, & Khalid, 2012). Female child were considered an evil omen and fathers were terrified if the new born baby were female. Fathers not only become unhappy when a female child was born but also felt embarrassed. In pre-Islamic Arabia, there was a ridiculous discrimination against their female children whom they used to bury alive. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) not only protest to this culture but also ordered to stop it. He showing them that supporting their female children would act as a screen for them against the fire of Hell (Doi, 1992).

Under original Hindu law, women were treated like slave who had no rights of inheritance (Uddin, & Hossain, 2017). If the husband of woman died during her lifetime, then she had to burn herself alive when the dead body was cremated (Doi, 1992). Widow had no right to remarry who had to bear intolerable pain in her daily life. In Chinese culture, there were many atrocious customs had to bear a girl. A male child was treated as an immense gift of God but female was an acceptable degradation (Saifee, Baloach, Sultan, & Khalid, 2012). In Greek society, women were treated to be the incarnation of evil and they had no right of inheritance, education, divorce etc. (Saifee, Baloach, Sultan, & Khalid, 2012). They were considered as material goods who had no feelings and free will. In ancient Rome, cruelties towards women were unbearable. Women had no rights, dignity or honour and the position of the women was like slave (Kabir, 2009). Men had authority to sell her or send her into exile even a husband had power of summarily putting his wife to death for acts like drinking, poisoning and substitution of a spurious child (Doi, 1992). In Jewish society, women were lived without right, dignity and honour. They had no right of inheritance and were considered as an object owned by the male protector.

3. Rights, Dignity, Honour and Status of Women in Islam

Islam does not allow the domination of men over women rather it upholds the rights, dignity, honour and status of women by ensuring gender equality and also equality of rights for both male and female in every area of human life. In Islam a woman is completely self-regulating who has legal personality and who is able to enter into contract or can make bequest in her own name. She has right to perform any profession or business and has authority to dispose her property as like as men. She is entitled for inheritance in different capacity like as mother, as wife, as sister and as daughter. She has full freedom to select her husband and also allowed to her dower and maintenance. As the command of Islam to the men is to treat with compassion and full respect to their wives, women are respectable and honourable in Islam (Mohammad, & Lehmann, 2011). A woman as mother has immense respect in Islam than any other person. The holy Quran in many verses commands Muslims to demonstrate respect to their mothers and serve them well even if they left Islam and are still remain as unbelievers. The prophet (peace be upon him) states insistently that the rights of the mother are supreme (Doi, 1992). In Islam women are most respectable and honourable “if she is a wife, she is life partner, if she is as a mother, the paradise is under the feet of mother, if she is daughter it is blessing of Almighty Allah” (Soomro, & Khuhro, 2018). The different types of rights of women ensured in Islam are:

3.1. Inheritance

The pre-Islamic customs relating to succession were biased, vindictive, and unreasonable and in most of the cases violated justice (Akter, Rahman, & Dolon, 2012). Women were treated as property and they were not entitled to inheritance whether as mother or wife or daughter or sister. There was no specific system for cognates and agnates and always males could get preferences. There were established traditions that the nearest male agnates succeeded to the entire estate of the deceased and females and cognates were excluded (Rashid, 2004). Islam ensured the rights of inheritance of women many centuries ago than western countries (Sechzer, 2004). In Islam six classes of persons never deprive from inheritance (Faiz-ud-din, 2008). Among these six classes of persons, three classes of persons are male (father, husband and son) and rest three are female (mother, wife and daughter). In Islamic law of inheritance, among twelve sharers (called Quranic sharer whose share is define in Quran) numbers of women are eight (“wife, mother, daughter, son’s daughter, true grandmother, full sister, consanguine sister and uterine sister”) and the numbers of men are four (father, husband, true grandfather and uterine brother) (Haque, 2009). So Islam does not neglect women giving more importance to men.

In case of right of inheritance of a woman as mother three situations may arise. She may be entitled either 1/6 (if the deceased person has a child or son’s child how low so ever or two or more brothers or sisters) or 1/3 (if the deceased person do not have any child or son’s child or not more than one brother and sister) or 1/3 of residue (if the deceased person have wife or husband and father) (4:11). As wife two situations may arise and she may be entitled either 1/4

(if the deceased person have child or son's child how low so ever) or 1/8 (if the deceased person do not have any child or son's child) of the property of the deceased. (4:12). As daughter, if only one daughter and no son her share is 1/2 and if two or more daughters and no son their share is 2/3 and if there is son daughter will be residue and each daughter will get half of son. (4:11). Besides this, parents could distribute property equally between a son and a daughter (Khanum, 2008). Islam is the only religion that does not deprive women from their right of inheritance rather ensured right of inheritance of women.

3.2. Marriage

Allah has created men and women as company for one another and so that they can procreate and live in peace and tranquillity according to the commandments of almighty Allah and the directions of His Messenger. Allah says:

“And among His signs is this that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that you may dwell in tranquillity with them, and He has put love and mercy between your hearts. Undoubtedly in these are signs for those who reflect.” (30:21)

Marriage is treated as the basis of social life and the beginning of the family life. It is compulsory (Wajib) for a man who has the means to easily pay the dower (Mahr) and to bear the expenses of a wife and children, and also physically fit, and doubts that if does not marry, he may be allured to commit adultery (Zina) and also obligatory for a woman who do not have any other legal way of maintaining herself and who doubts that her sexual urge may move forward her into adultery (Doi, 1992). It protects society and safe guard human being from foulness and unchastity (Akter, Rahman, & Dolon, 2012).

In Islam marriage is an act for the pleasure of Allah because it is according to His orders that husband and wife love each other and help each other to make efforts to continue the human race and rear and foster their children to become true servant of Allah. As it is also the biological instincts to have sexual intercourse, marriage is not only satisfying sexual lust of men and women but also preserve future generation (Hidayatullah & Hidayatullah, 1990).

In case of marriage, Islam has given equal importance both bride groom and bride as for being a valid marriage any party may offer to the other party and it must be accepted by the other party (Rashid, 2004). Through valid marriage mutual right of inheritance are established and wife become entitle to her dower and maintenance. But marries does not give power to the husband over the wife's person beyond the limit of law and right upon her goods and property (Hidayatullah & Hidayatullah, 1990). In marriage in Islam women are at liberty to choose their life partner. Nobody can force her to choose her mate or to marry even one's father, mother, brother, sister or any paternal or maternal guardian. Marriage of major woman previously married without her consent is unanimously void and of a major virgin girl without her consent is unlawful (Faiz-ud-din, 2008). Islam showed full respect to the women and ensured rights, dignity and honour and equal status of men and women in case of marriage because for being a valid marriage acquiescence of the bride groom as well as bride is mandatory. In this regard no one is superior.

3.3. Dower

In pre-Islamic period dower was paid to the wife's father or other guardian, which was used to signify gifts (sadaka) and could therefore be regarded as sell price in present time. Islam approved dower (mahr) to be paid to the wife in case of regular marriage as respect to the wife and not as sell price. Dower may be a sum of money or any other kind

of property of which the wife is legally entitled to get from the husband as a token of respect. It cannot be treated as consideration or exchange given to the wife for entering into marriage contract.

Islam has given importance for the payment of dower and also imposed duty on the husband to pay dower to the wife. The holy Quran states, "Give women (wives) their dower with no strings attached. If they themselves (wives) give some of it back to you (waive it), then consume it (dower) with good cheer." (4:4). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Pay dower (mahr) to your wife even it is a ring made of iron" (Faiz-ud-din, 2008). According to the provision of Islam, husband must have to pay dower to the wife either in cash or any other form and husband has no way to deny his liability except paying dower. It may be prompt or deferred.

It is like a debt or duty for the husband to pay dower and a right of the wife to receive it. In case of dower Islam has showed respect and given full authority to the wife as she can demand her dower at any time without any explanation and can waive full or any part of her dower as she like and no one can interfere in this matter. Islam has given rights to the wife and imposed duty on the husband if the amount of dower was not settled during the time of marriage or later on, the wife is entitled to proper dower, though the marriage was completed on the stipulation that the wife cannot demand any dower (Hidayatullah & Hidayatullah, 1990). In determine the amount of proper dower, the social position of the wife's family, financial condition of the husband, personal qualifications of the bride and dower settled upon the female members of the family of the bride's father will be consider. Under Islamic law, where there is a marriage there is a dower whatever may be the amount and it is bridal gift (Akter, Rahman, & Dolon, 2012). According to the direction of the Prophet (peace be upon him) if anybody do not pay the dower in the Day of Judgment he will be treated as adulterate. Islam has ensured the right of dower of a woman and given her unlimited and unrestricted power to dispose her dower in any lawful way as she like.

3.4. Maintenance

Maintenance (nafaqa) is very significant issue in Muslim personal law. To afford maintenance is not only legally approved but also it is an act of devotion (ibadat). Under Muslim law, maintenance is due to the wife from the husband as a recompense for the matrimonial restraint and is one of the necessary and inherent conditions of the marriage contract. Husband responsibility is to provide proper maintenance and it is such a duty that must be discharged cheerfully without any censure, hurt or patronization (Faiz-ud-din, 2008). The holy command "Let him provide her (wife) maintenance according to his ability" (65:7). It is duty upon the husband to provide proper food, cloth and accommodation if she surrenders herself to him although she is Muslim or infidel or poor or rich, grown-up or young (Rashid, 2004).

Muslim husband is legally bound to provide maintenance to his wife so long as she is truthful to him and observe his lawful orders whether she is poor or rich will not be considered. Maintenance is one of important legal rights of the wife and a legal duty of the husband who will not be exempted from this liability whatever may be his financial condition. A wife can demand maintenance during her sickness in her husband's house and even if a man divorces his wife her bread and accommodation are attributed upon him during the period of iddat (remaining unmarried for a period of three months after dissolution of marriage) whether the divorce is of reversible or irreversible kind. The wife becomes entitle for maintenance immediately after valid marriage and husband cannot deny his liability of providing maintenance. When there subsists a valid marriage there must have a right of maintenance by the wife. Islam does not impose liability upon the wife to bear expenses of the family or to bear expenses of her husband on any condition rather ensured her right to get maintenance from her husband.

3.5. Divorce

In the Dark Age, when Islam does not emerge in Arabs, only the husband had power of divorce and which was so unrestricted and unlimited that he practiced in the most inhuman ways. Husband could divorce his wife whenever he liked without any legal or reasonable cause. He had also the power to revoke his divorce and divorce again as many times as he favoured. He could, moreover, if he so desired, swear that he had made no sexual relation with his wife, though still living with her. The husband exercised limitless rights over the wife. If a man became angry with his wife, whether for any reasonable cause or just to satisfy his caprice, he could divorce her at once, but the unfortunate wife could neither have recourse to any legal procedure nor get any maintenance from him nor claim any other kind of right from him. Regarding right of divorce men enjoyed vast powers who could easily get rid of his wife by levelling a flimsy charge against him.

The Prophet Muhammad looked upon these evil customs of divorce with tremendous dissatisfaction and regarded their practice as considered to damage the foundation of society. It was quite impossible to abolish this evil custom completely. The Prophet (peace be upon him) had to mould the mind of an uncultured and semi-barbarous community to a higher development. In case of extreme emergency, Islam permitted divorce if all efforts of bringing together have unsuccessful. Islam recognized that when it has become impossible to continue conjugal life it is better for both husband and wife to separate harmoniously rather than miserably bound together which turns the home into a hell.

The rectification of Mohammad marked a new departure in the history of Eastern legislation. He reserved unrestricted power of divorce by the husband but also given to the wife the right of obtaining the partition on rational grounds. Though divorce is allowed in Islam with some conditions it discourages dissolution of a marriage-tie as Prophet (peace be upon him) says: "Of all things that Islam has permitted, divorce is the most hated by Allah." (Abu Da'ud). Islam has given to the women right regarding dissolution of marriage by:

1) Delegated divorce (Talaque-e-tafweez): The wife also may exercise this right to dissolve her marriage if the husband delegates the power of dissolution of marriage to the wife (Soomro & Khuhro, 2018). This delegation of power can be during the marriage or at any time after marriage. The power so delegated to the wife is irrevocable and it can be exercised even after the institution of a suit by the husband against her for restitution of conjugal rights.

2) Redemption (Khul'a): It means a mutual agreement between husband and wife where both of them agree to break off their marriage in lieu of a recompense paid by the wife to her husband out of her property (Faiz-ud-din, 2008). If the relationship of a husband and a wife is not fine, the wife has a right to seek divorce (khul'a) by renouncing her claim to the dower (Rashid, 2004). According to the Prophet (Sm) of Islam, "If a woman be prejudiced by a marriage, let it be broken."

3) Mutual release (Mubar'at): When both the parties of a marriage feel aversion, they have liberty to release each other without any claim upon the other. In this form of divorce both of the parties to the marriage have right to offer and the other party has right to accept and when it is accepted marriage will be dissolved and it is an irrevocable divorce (Hidayatullah & Hidayatullah, 1990).

3.6. Right to Choose Profession

In Islam like men women have various responsibilities towards the family and society as she is considered one of the two important pillars of the society. Islam does not like laziness, vanity and workless people. In Islam there is no difference between men and women in regard to work and working is a duty for both. In Islam women have freedom to choose their occupation but in choosing their profession they must keep in mind that they have some limitations due to their physical structure. As they are exquisite, sensitive beautiful beings they have to be more conscious before involving any profession. Though in Islam women have liberty to select their profession but it imposes some

restrictions at the same time because a married woman cannot choose any profession by which her husband will be deprived to enjoy his conjugal rights or children will be deprived from maternal love, care and affection and proper education and training.

3.7. Right to Proprietorship

In regard to ownership of property Islam has given equal respect to the women like men. She may gain property through lawful means and become owner and she has also right to dispose of that property in any legal way as she wishes. Nobody whether father or husband or mother or even her children have no right to interfere her regarding her property. It is not her responsibility to bear expense of the family even her maintenance or maintenance of the children. Husband has no right in her personal property. She is not liable to pay the debt of her husband. But in case of necessity, he may take loan from her and in that case, she will have all rights of a creditor.

3.8. Right to Seek Knowledge

In Islam acquiring knowledge is obligatory for both men and women. In this regard an unmarried woman has full freedom to acquire knowledge and nobody can obstruct her from acquiring knowledge. A married woman also has right of acquiring knowledge but she must observe the right of her husband and children.

3.9. Right to Involve in Politics

Islam ensured political independence of men and women. There is opportunity for a woman to involve in politics (Rezvani, 2013). She can participate in political convention, street demonstrations, congregations and Friday prayers. She has right to self defence and defends her property and even she can participate in war to defend the sovereignty of her own country. But for all these she has to follow the directions of Islam.

3.10. Right to Choose Residence

A woman has freedom to choose residence for herself. In Islam, as it is the liability of husband to provide proper maintenance to his wife, a married woman must stay to her husband's place of residence. Considering the ability and benefit of her husband a married woman can select her residence in such place as dignity of the family is properly maintained. According to the direction of Islam she cannot claim her residence in such place which will be some hardship for her husband.

3.11. Economic Rights of Women

A Muslim woman is allowed to involve herself in economic activities following some rules. The women who are highly talented and have the opportunity to acquire higher degree can render services for the betterment of the society, particularly in the teaching profession. But here too, a strict Islamic code of conduct has to be observed in the classroom. As for medical profession, women doctors are badly needed in the field of gynaecology and obstetrics. Usually, women feel shy and even forbidden by Islam from consulting male doctor as per as possible in their ante-natal and post-natal treatment but if it is a question of life and death then in special circumstances it is

permitted. In Islam women are encouraged in medical profession. Women can involve in welfare institutions of the society. With her Allah-given touch of loving and affection she can handle juvenile delinquents, drop-outs from schools frustrated youths. Even she has right to work in a factory if it is run by women.

A Woman's Testimony:

One of the major objections raised by the opponents of Islam to Islamic teachings is that Islam had attached half the value to the testimony of a woman as compared to that of a man and had, thus, declared women as inferior. However, this objection, like other objections, has been concocted for no valid reason and due to not understanding the truth and spirit of Islamic teachings.

“The fact of the matter is that the Holy Quran has not stated anywhere that a woman’s testimony was worth half that of a man. Rather, if we ponder over the Holy Quran, we see that in such matters that are directly related to women, the testimony of a woman has been accepted in the same way as that of a man. Hence, in case of li‘an, the method of testimony that has been stipulated in Surah an-Nur, there is no difference between the testimony or the oath of the woman or the man, rather exactly the same conclusion has been drawn from both. Thus, Allah the Exalted states:

وَالَّذِينَ يَرْمَمُونَ أَزْوَاجَهُمْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُمْ شُهَدَاءٌ إِلَّا أَفْسُدُمْ فَتَهَدَّدُ أَحَدُهُمْ أَرْبَعَ شَهَادَاتٍ بِاللَّهِ إِلَهُ لِمَنِ الصَّادِقِينَ. وَالْخَامِسَةُ أَنْ لَعْنَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ. وَيَنْزَرُوا عَنْهَا الْعَذَابَ إِنْ تَشْهَدْ أَرْبَعَ شَهَادَاتٍ بِاللَّهِ إِلَهُ لِمَنِ الْكَاذِبِينَ. وَالْخَامِسَةُ أَنْ غَنِمَتِ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهَا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ.

“And as for those who calumniate their wives, and have not witnesses except themselves — the evidence of any one of such people (shall suffice) if he bears witness four times in the name of Allah (saying) that he is surely of those who speak the truth. And (his) fifth (oath shall be to say) that Allah’s curse be upon him if he be of the liars. But it shall avert the punishment from her if she bears witness four times in the name of Allah (saying) that he is of the liars. And (her) fifth (oath shall be to say) that the wrath of Allah be upon her if he speaks the truth.” (Surah an-Nur, Ch.24: V.7-10)

“Moreover, it is also proven from Hadith that the Holy Prophet separated a married couple on account of the testimony of a single woman who said that she had nursed both the bridegroom and the bride during their childhood. Hence, Hazrat ‘Uqbara bin al-Harith relates that he had married the daughter of Abu Ihab bin Aziz. Later on, a woman came forward and said, ‘I have nursed ‘Uqba and the woman whom he has married. (Hence, they are foster-siblings and their marriage is invalid.)’ ‘Uqba said to her, ‘Neither did I know that you had nursed me, nor did you previously inform me about it.’ Then ‘Uqba mounted his ride and went to see Allah’s Messenger at Medina; he asked him about (the issue at hand). Allah’s Messenger said, ‘How can you keep her as your wife when it has been said [that she is your foster-sister]?’ Thus, ‘Uqba let go of her and she married another man. (Sahih al-Bukhari, Kitab al-‘ilm, Bab ar-rihlati fi l-mas’alati n-nazilati wa ta‘limi ‘ahlilh)

“As far as the testimony of men and women in cases dealing with debts or loans is concerned, since such cases are generally related to men and not directly to women, we have been instructed that, if the men appointed to testify in such cases are not available, two women should be appointed along with a man, so that if the woman who is testifying forgets the details of her testimony, the other woman may remind her.

“In other words, even in this scenario, the actual testimony is only that of one woman. The second woman is only appointed as a precautionary measure to remind the first one lest she forget because such issues are not directly related to her. The text of the Holy Quran also supports this understanding, as it states:

يَا أَيُّهُمْسَلَامُ لَمْ يُؤْتِرْتُ لَهُمْ بِأَنَّهُمْ لَجُرْفَ نِيلَجَزُ أَنْوَكِي مَلَى إِلَيْهِمْ مُكْلَاجِرُ ثُمَّ نِيلَجَزُ أَنْوَكِي اَوْهُشَشَنَوْ ... بَعْسَمْ لِجَأْ بِلَأْ بِنَتِبْ مُنْتَيَادِتْ إِذَا اَوْلَمَا تَبِدِلَ اَهِيَا بَرَخَلَا اَمَهَادِخَرِي كِنْتْ اَمَهَادِخِ اَلِبِيتْ

“O ye who believe! when you borrow one from another for a fixed period... And call two witnesses from among your men; and if two men be not (available), then a man and two women, of such as you like as witnesses, so that if either of two (women) should err (in memory), then one may remind the other.’ (Surah al-Baqarah, Ch. 2, V. 283)

“Thus, whether it is a woman or a man, the status and importance of the testimony of both is equal even in cases related to loan transactions. However, since financial deals are usually not related to women, we have been instructed to appoint another woman with the testifying woman to help her by reminding her of the matter in case she forgets the details of the case. This is so that neither of the two parties in the case may be wronged because of her forgetting.”

Woman is not forbidden to go out of her home for necessity. In the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him), women went out to the market or their farms. The prophet (peace be upon him) did not stop a woman in her iddat from going out of her house in case of necessity. Jabir ibn Abdullah says husband of my aunt divorced her and when she was spending her iddat in the house she wanted to go outside of the house to get some of her date palms harvested and sold. Someone halted her, saying that you are not allowed to go out of the house during iddat. She went to the Prophet (peace be upon him) to whether she could go outside of the house or not and the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “You go out and get the date trees harvested (and sold) so that you may be able to do some other good work.” (Abu Da’ud).

4. Prevailing Misconceptions in Our world Regarding Women Rights in Islam

Some misconceptions regarding women’s rights in Islam are prevailing in our world for long time. These misconceptions directly neglect the women, dishonoured them and discriminate them. Some people without proper religious knowledge, to dominate the women, to deprive women from their rights as given in Islam and to establish superiority of men over women practice these misconceptions as rule of Islam. But Islam does not support these misconceptions these are direct contradiction of Islamic rules and principles. Some misconceptions regarding women rights prevailing in our world are:

- 1) “Islam deprived women as in inheritance they are getting half share as compared to men”. There is a misconception in the media that Islam deprived women in case of right of inheritance. But most of the people do not realize what the place of women in Islam is. In Islam, from the property of her parents a woman is entitled to get 1/2 of the share as compared to her brother but she has no financial liability towards the family. She is entitled to her dower, to get gifts during her marriage and she is not required to spend her income to bear the expenses of the family. Her all expenses are bear by father before marriage and by the husband after marriage (Orakzai, 2014). Besides these, she has right of inheritance in the property of her husband and also in the property of the children.
- 2) “Unconditionally a man can take four wives at a time”. Another misconception prevailing in our society regarding polygamy. According to the rules of Islam, only one wife per man is permitted, unless the wife desires her husband to take another wife during the marriage contract.

Is polygamy legal in Islam?

What did the Muslim Prophet Muhammad have to say on the topic of polygamy?

Did he have more than one wife at a time, as many critics of Islam claim?

Few people concern themselves with approaching the religious texts with an open mind or studying the holy books objectively, but content themselves with their own, often biased, interpretation of the faith. In this brief video, we will attempt to go over a few of the most controversial and least understood topics in Islam. And that is whether polygamy is an Islamic practice or even permitted in this monotheistic religion.

Some critics claim Muhammad married multiple women, and they cite evidence from unsubstantiated sources. However, Islamic history wasn't written by the Prophet's companions or Muslim scholars. A huge part was dictated by the pagans of Mecca, who did not spare any effort to vilify the Islamic faith. It is from those unreliable sources that we hear about Muhammad marrying a young girl of nine named Aisha, when in essence, Aisha was nineteen at the time of betrothal.

Muhammad had no reported scandals in his youth, and at the age of 25, he married an elderly widow named Khadeejah. It is obvious that he did not marry her for sexual gratification but for love and mutual respect.

One question that is often put forth is why did Muhammad have eleven wives while Islam allows up to four wives?

The errors in the above question are two-fold. One, Islam never allowed men to marry four wives, and this claim stems from erroneous interpretation of the Koran. The Islamic holy book stipulates that only one wife is to be retained at a time. The second part of the question asks why Muhammad had numerous wives? Muhammad married only one woman in his youth, and when his elderly wife passed away, he reluctantly entered into a second marriage, and that too with an elderly widow. Nowhere in the Koran or prophetic traditions or hadith, does it mention that Muhammad had nine or eleven wives. These alleged hadiths, that claim Muhammad practiced polygamy have been sourced from fabricated narrations.

It is astounding how only Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) is accused of polygamy, when it was the other prophets such as Abraham David, Solomon and Jacob who were all in polygamous marriages. According to the Old and New Testament, their wives and concubines came in great numbers. Polygamy was not at all uncommon in biblical times, and according to the biblical accounts, Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines. King David is reported to have six to ten wives. Although God provided rights and protections for concubines in the Law of Moses, there was no limit on the number of women a man could marry. Islam changed this. When the Koran insisted that man should only keep one wife, and in his lifetime, Muhammad also acted on this monogamous principle.

Islam did not invent polygamy, but regulated it in favour of women before banning it completely.

Muhammad was not allowed to be more polygamous than his followers, and consequently, retained only one wife.

Even when polygamy was initially severely restricted, but permitted only if a wife stipulated it in the marriage contract that she desires her husband to take another wife, Islam made polygamy more humane, instituting equal rights for all wives. However, Muslim women and wives have always been given the right to put condition against it in their marriage contract.

The Koran advocated for men to marry "only one" and general rule in Islam is monogamy. Not polygamy.

The Koran verse that is often cited as evidence for polygamy is in Chapter An-Nisaa:

"Marry women of your choice, two, or three, or four; but if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly with them, then only one."

Polygamy in Islam is not recommended; it was only permitted under certain guidelines.

Permission to practice polygamy is not associated with mere satisfaction of passion. It is, rather, associated with compassion toward widows and orphans.

Before the Quran was revealed, there was no upper limit for polygamy, and many Arab and non-Arab men had more than four wives. Before banning it completely, Islam put an upper limit of four wives, permitting a man to marry more than once, only on the condition that he deal justly with all of them. Yet the same verse points out: "You are

never able to be fair and just as between women." Hence, effectively negating the idea of polygamy. The double negation proves that the Islamic God used logical reasonings to ban the practice of polygamy once and for all.

As we can see, polygamy has been negated in the verses of the Koran. It is a decree by the Muslim God, who commanded men and women to practice monogamy at all times.

The same God who granted Jews the Law of Moses at biblical Mount Sinai and revealed Torah to Prophet Moses, and the New Testament to Prophet Jesus, is the One God who revealed the Final Testament, or the Koran, to Muhammad, who Muslims consider to be last of all the Prophets.

So, who was Muhammad?

The Islamic religion was founded by a man named Muhammad, who was a shepherd in his youth. Muhammad is arguably one of the most controversial icons of the modern world, not least because there has been little historical research done on his persona.

Since he was a young man, Muhammad was known as the most truthful person in Mecca. From before his prophethood, he believed in the God of Abraham and shunned idol-worship. He never spoke a lie even as a joke. Muhammad lived by a unique set of morals, and in his entire life, he did not kill one human being even in war when he was attacked and tortured fiercely.

So, what was Arabia like before Muhammad taught the pagan desert inhabitants to worship the God of Abraham and give up idolatry?

Arabia was less than civilized when Muhammad was a young man. Rampant murders, tribal feuds, illicit relationships, indiscriminate slavery and mass plundering was the norm. Even prior to becoming a prophet, Muhammad abhorred such practices and encouraged others to be charitable. Following the advent of his prophethood, Muhammad gave women equal rights in a time when women were nothing but the property of men. Muhammad taught people the covenants of Islam which gave women the right to buy and sell without hindrance, own businesses and express her views politically. These were all basic rights which the American and European woman was not granted until relatively recently.

Muhammad also encouraged women to study and learn Islamic and scientific knowledge, breaking a ban which several religions had stipulated, that forbid women from acquiring any religious knowledge or touch religious texts... It also abolished the practice of marrying a woman without her consent. Thus, many historians suggest that by bringing forth Islam, the Prophet Muhammad was women's first liberator in 6th century Arabia.

While many people around the world are misinformed about Muhammad's lifestyle and characteristics, others have given him the due credit for the many changes he brought about.

After his prophet-hood, Muhammad was granted the Koran, a scripture which had never been changed in the last 1400 years. Muslims believe the Koran is undoubtedly from a Supreme and Spiritual Being because the scientific facts that are stated in the Koran are in no way possible for man to have known 14 centuries ago. The book of Islam-regardless of what subject it refers to- has often being proven as God's Word as each new piece of historical, scientific or archaeological information comes to light. Facts about scientific subjects and the news delivered to us about the past and future, facts that no human being could have known at the time of the Koran's revelation, are announced in its verses. It is impossible for this information to have been known with the level of knowledge and technology available in 7th century Arabia. In addition to mentioning the atomic number every single element, the genetic code of many living organisms, the theory of entropy and a steadily expanding universe, and how each individual's fingertips are absolutely unique, when we have only discovered this fact recently, using modern technology and modern scientific equipment, the Koran includes unique details about black holes, Pulsars, the Rosette Nebula, sub-atomic particles, quantum physics, fossilization and iron content, the layers of Earth, the weight of clouds, the relativity of Time, the Force of Gravity, the Orbital Movements, the sun's trajectory, the programming in genes, the sun's hydrogen and helium content, or many other facts scientists of our day are only just beginning to discover. In Chapter 4 of the Koran, God informs people: "If it (the Koran) had been from other than Allah, they would have found many inconsistencies in it." (Qur'an, verse 82 of chapter 4) This verse was meant to highlight that Muhammad, who was an ordinary human, couldn't have known those scientific facts back then which only modern science is being able to prove now.

Muhammad loved animals and was especially fond of both cats and dogs. He entreated the Bedouin Arabs to treat their camels gently. Dogs were also considered to be valued creations of God and held a very high position in the Koran as is mentioned in Chapter Kahaf.

Muhammad opposed animal cruelty and severely reprimanded cattle owners who mistreated their herds. He never ordered to kill a single dog or cat in his entire lifetime. Despite his idealized vision for peace and stability, the pagan Arabs of Mecca were outraged by his demands. Muhammad was tortured mercilessly by pagans when he began to preach the teachings of Islam, but he never retaliated and was eventually forced to flee to nearby city of Medina. When Prophet Muhammad took over Mecca a decade later, he never took revenge against any one of his former oppressors.

Muhammad continued preaching Islam to those vanquished Meccans and offered them utmost mercy and freedom, which included granting liberty especially to women and slaves, who were oppressed mercilessly by the pagan Romans and the French. Women in those societies neither had the right to inherit nor had the right to marry on her own, or buy or sell or own any property at the pre-Islamic period. Muhammad therefore announced that women had men had equal position in the eyes of God, and he gave them the right to inherit, buy, sell, and marry on their own.

Attempt to introduce greater sexual equality to religion did not produce great results in the past, partially because some men hijacked the faith and dragged it back to the old patriarchy. This happened in both Christianity and Islam, latter-day reassessments of axial age monotheism. The Prophet Mohammed, for example, was anxious to emancipate women and they were among his first converts. In 7th century Arabia, the Koran taught people that men and women had exactly the same responsibilities and duties, and gave women rights of inheritance and divorce that we would not enjoy in the west until the 19th century.

Muhammad's inherent desire to instill civil behavior into his countrymen drove him to the streets. For days, he would traverse the desert hills and entreat his fellow Arabs to enjoin kindness and equality. He urged them to free their slaves and deal mercifully with women and children. Muhammad encouraged the wealthy Arab merchants to give charity to the poor and orphans. But the pagan Arabs were infuriated by his claims that women and men should enjoy equal rights. This caused them to torture and persecute him endlessly. One of his staunch persecutors was his own uncle and his cousin. For three years, his fellow Meccans and other dominant tribes levied a ban on trade with Muhammad's family and followers and subjected them to near famine conditions. In this sanction, Muhammad's wife and uncle both died, but Muhammad survived the ordeal. The pagan leaders of Mecca then attempted to assassinate Muhammad but he fled Mecca at nightfall and escaped to the city of Medina.

Why were the people who call themselves Arab today torturing and killing Muhammad and his family 14 centuries ago?

It was because he enjoined others to do acts of charity and free their slaves and respect the womenfolk. His crime was he wanted to give women more rights than men. He banned murder and called for an end to tribal feuds, in which wealthy families got away by killing poor or less distinguished people. They resented the fact that he abolished slavery and stipulated that prisoners of war could be taken in the aftermath of a combat but must be freed upon the payment of ransom. He would remain in near starvation rations to ensure the prisoners of war were fed adequately. The endless persecution became unbearable for Muhammad and his followers. And only after a Christian King in Africa offered him and the Muslims shelter in his country did the believers get some respite for a few days.

3) Another misconception pertaining to women's right: "Consent of bride is not so important for marriage". Male dominated societies do not want to give equal importance of the consent of bride like bride groom in case of marriage. They think that consent of the father or guardian is final for the marriage of a girl but Islam does not support it. According to Islam, for a valid marriage free consent of the bride and bride groom is required. Islam has given right of a woman to choose her life partner.

4) "No marriage without dowry". The most heinous practice in many places which Islam never supports is dowry system. It has become such social practice in pagan customs that sometimes marriage cannot imagine without dowry. Some greedy people established system in the society that wife have to bring wealth from her parents and sometimes they torture physically or mentally and even sometimes causes death of the wife by torture for dowry (Ahmed, 1997).

5) "Women have no right of divorce in Islam". Though in Islam husband has absolute power to divorce but he may delegate this power to the wife. According to Islam both husband and wife can separate by mutual understanding. Besides these, she may demand separation by relinquishing all claims to the husband.

The main reasons of prevailing misconceptions in our society regarding women rights in Islam are firstly not having proper knowledge regarding rules and regulations of Islam; secondly to dominate the women and to establish superiority of men over women; thirdly to deprive the women from their legal rights as given them by Islam; fourthly illiteracy of women and lack of awareness among women are one of the main reasons of misconceptions regarding women rights in Islam; fifthly to neglect the women and to dishonour them and to discriminate them; as most of the religious interpreters are male.

The Concept of Slavery: Primarily, Islam unequivocally does not permit the capture and enslavement of enemy women simply because they belong to the enemy ranks. The teaching of Islam is that no one can be taken as a captive until an active war is underway. Allah the Exalted proclaims in the Holy Quran:

مَا كَانَ لِنَبِيٍّ أَنْ يَعْلُمَ لَمَّا أُسْرِيَ حَتَّىٰ يُخْرَجَنَّ فِي الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ يُرْتَدُونَ عَرَضَ الدُّنْيَا * وَاللَّهُ يُرِيدُ الْأَخْرَجَةَ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

"It does not behove a Prophet that he should have captives until he engages in regular fighting in the land. You desire the goods of the world, while Allah desires for you the Hereafter. And Allah is Mighty, Wise." (Surah al-Anfal, Ch.8: V.68)

"Thus, given the precondition of a bloody war, only those women used to be taken captive who were present on the battlefield with intent to fight. Hence, they were not merely civilian women but had arrived there as combatant enemies.

"Furthermore, examining the wartime laws and customs of that period reveals that in those times, during conflicts, both parties would seize each other's individuals, whether they were men, children, or women, and enslave them.

"Therefore, pursuant to [جَرِزاً سَيِّئَةً سَيِّئَةً مُنْتَهِيَّا], 'the recompense of an injury is an injury the like thereof' (Surah ash-Shura, Ch.42: V.41)], it does not emerge as objectionable for Muslims to act thus, in accordance with their own mutually agreed-upon rules of engagement. This is particularly the case when viewed within the framework of the norms, environment, and laws of that region and era. During that period, the belligerent parties conducted warfare in adherence to the prevalent rules and regulations, and all the principles of war were uniformly applied to both sides, which the opposing party did not object to. The matter would only become contentious if Muslims deviated from the agreed-upon rules [like the disbelievers often did].

“Despite all this, the Holy Quran has intricately tethered all these rules of war with a foundational principle. The Holy Quran commands:

فَمَنْ أَعْنَدَنِي عَلَيْكُمْ فَأَعْنَدُوكُمْ عَلَيْهِ بِمِثْلِ مَا أَعْنَدَنِي عَلَيْكُمْ

“‘Whoso transgresses against you, punish him for his transgression to the extent to which he has transgressed against you.’ (Surah al-Baqarah, Ch.2: V.195)

“It further states:

فَمَنْ أَعْنَدَنِي بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَإِنَّ عَذَابَ اللَّهِ

“‘Whoso, therefore, will transgress after this shall have a grievous punishment.’ (Surah al-Ma’idah, Ch.5: V.95)

“This is a foundational doctrine that holds a distinctive superiority over the teachings of all prior religions. Upon studying the precepts concerning warfare in the Bible and other holy scriptures of different faiths, one encounters teachings that urge total annihilation of the enemy. These not only pertain to men and women but extend to even prescribing the looting, incineration, and destruction of their children, livestock, and homes.

“Even in circumstances where the contending parties are consumed by uncontrolled emotions, determined to annihilate one another, and where anger is so inflamed that it persists even after the act of killing and is only satiated by the desecration of the enemy’s remains, the Holy Quran imparts such teachings that are akin to placing a rein on untameable horses. The Companionsra honoured this teaching with such grace that history is replete with hundreds of commendable and awe-inspiring examples.

“In those times, disbelievers would take Muslim women captive and subject them to extreme cruelty, rape and sexual and physical slavery. Beyond just imprisoning them, they would also mutilate the corpses of the fallen Muslims, severing their noses and ears. They would also crucify Muslims and kill one hundred Muslims for the death of one pagan although that killing happened in the midst of the battlefield. The event where Hindah chewed on the liver of Muhammads uncle Hamzahra is an unforgettable episode.

“However, even amidst such circumstances, Muslims were instilled with the teaching that, despite being on the battlefield, they should never brandish their swords against a woman or a child, and were strictly prohibited from any form of desecration of the enemy’s corpses. Thus, even in the face of death, the dignity of the enemy’s remains was upheld.

“Also, it should be remembered that in the early days of Islam, in Arab society, there were two types of bondwomen. One type was those who came into the possession of Muslims through means other than wars. Islam taught that a Muslim who educates and nurtures a slave woman in his possession, and then frees her and marries her with her consent, will receive a twofold reward. (Sahih al-Bukhari, Kitab al-‘ilm, Bab ta‘limi r-rajuli ‘amatahu wa ‘ahlahu) A Muslim was not allowed to be involved in physical relations with such bondwomen without marriage, as clarified in the aforementioned directive of the Holy Prophet, that such a woman should be educated, nurtured, and then freed. And when a woman is freed, her consent is a mandatory condition for marriage.

“The other type were those female prisoners of war who were in those times when enemies of Islam were subjecting Muslims to various kinds of oppression, and if the wife of a poor, oppressed Muslim fell into their hands, they would include her among their women as a slave.

“Hence, in accordance with the Quranic injunction of حُرُفًا مُّنْتَهٰى سَيِّئَةٌ مُّنْتَهٰى [‘the recompense of an injury is an injury the like thereof’ (Surah ash-Shura, Ch.42: V.41)], women who came to aid the forces assaulting Islam were taken as captives, in line with the conventions of the time. Subsequently, if these women did not secure their freedom either by paying a ransom or through the procedure of mukatabat [a contractual agreement between a slave and their master, whereby the slave pledges to pay a negotiated amount, typically achieved through labour, in exchange for freedom], they would be distributed amongst the warriors. The warrior was then allowed to establish physical relations with such a woman, only if she agreed to marry him, which was deemed permissible in accordance with the aforementioned teachings and customs of the time.

“Regarding the matter of marriage with these captive women, there is one perspective.

“According to one stance, it was essential to marry these women before establishing physical relations with them.

Women who were part of the enemy force attacking Muslims and were taken as captives as per the customs of the time, there was a formal requirement for a nikah to establish marital relations with them. No Muslim was allowed to keep captive woman in one’s house as a wife without nikah for without wedding with a female prisoner of war, it was not permissible to have a relationship with her and her verbal consent for marriage was required.

What is his view on whether or not to marry a captive woman? The Holy Quran also explicated the matter of captive women, affirming that there was formal requirement of a nikah to establish conjugal relations with these female prisoners of war.

“Therefore, in light of the Quran, those bondwomen who fell under Muslim possession by means other than warfare, it was prohibited to establish relations with them with or without marriage. However, women from the enemies of Islam, who joined the enemy’s army to assist them and became captives alongside other war prisoners as a result of the enemy’s defeat, Muslim warriors, into whose share they fell as POW were required to perform a formal marriage involving the consent of the captive woman or the requirement of her guardian’s approval according to Islamic law. Instead, akin to many tribes and societies where the practice has been and still exists in some countries, they announced in society that they are husband and wife, which served as a form of marriage declaration. A man could never establish conjugal relations with the aforementioned type of captive woman without her marital consent.

“Moreover, the good treatment of female prisoners of war, arranging for their education and training, and freeing them, was declared a meritorious deed in Islam. Hence, a narration from Hazrat Abu Musa al-Ashari recounts:

فَالَّتِي أَتَمَا رَجُلٌ كَانَتْ لَهُ خَارِبَةً فَلَمَّا بَهَا فَأَخْسَنَ تَأْبِينَهَا وَأَعْتَقَهَا وَتَرَوَجَهَا فَلَهُ أَجْرٌ

“The Holy Prophet said: “‘He who has a prisoner woman and teaches her excellent manners and then frees and marries her, will get a twofold reward.’ (Sahih al-Bukhari, Kitab al-‘itq, Bab al-‘abdi idha ‘ahsana ‘ibadata rabbihim wa nasaha sayyidah)

This does not mean that marital relations with a non-pregnant woman without marriage are permissible. Absolutely not. Establishing marital relations with a woman without marriage is adultery, and adultery is deemed forbidden in Islam.

“So, fundamentally, Islam is unequivocally not in favour of making individuals into bondwomen or prisoners. In the early stages of Islam, permission was provisionally granted under the unique and compelling circumstances of that time. However, with considerable wisdom, Islam and the Holy Prophets encouraged manumission and insisted on the treatment of such individuals with kindness and respect, until they achieved their freedom or were emancipated.

“With the end of these specific circumstances, and as state laws evolved to their current form, the legitimacy of making individuals into bondwomen or prisoners also ceased. Now, in line with Islamic law, there is absolutely no justification for keeping a bondwoman or a slave. The fact of the matter is that, in that early era, many vile and evil-natured individuals, becoming enemies of Islam without just cause, would inflict various types of suffering on the Muslims; if they murdered a Muslim, they would often mutilate the corpse by severing the hands, feet, and nose, and they would even mercilessly murder children. If the woman of a poor, oppressed person came into their hands, they would make her a POW and include her among their women (but as a bondwoman), and there was no form of injustice that they did not commit. For a long time, the Muslims continued to receive the command from God Almighty to bear these atrocities with patience, but eventually, when the tyranny exceeded limits, God granted permission to fight these wicked people, but not to exceed the level of their atrocities. However, they were prohibited from mutilating, i.e., from severing the nose, ears, hands, etc., of any disbeliever’s corpse, and they were commanded to reciprocate the dishonour that these people preferred for the Muslims. As a result, the practice of keeping disbelievers’ women as prisoners of war and benefiting from them as women began in Islam. It was far from justice and fairness that when a disbeliever would capture a Muslim woman, he would make her a bondwoman and use her as a woman, and when a Muslim would capture their women and girls, he should treat them like mothers and sisters. Therefore, when the vile-natured people of Arabia did not desist from causing harm and pain, and shamelessly and disgracefully started committing sinful attacks even on women, God enacted this law for their admonishment, that if their women are also captured in battles, they should be treated in the same way. Hence, there is no ground for objection to this due to the famous proverb, ‘If an action is reciprocated, then there remain no grounds for complaint.’

‘Apart from this, Islam does not support the idea of making prisoners of war into slaves or bondwomen; in fact, the emphasis on freeing slaves in the Holy Quran is beyond imagination. The point is that, the practice of making bondwomen and slaves originated from the disbelievers and it was enacted in Islam as a form of punishment, and even then, encouragement was given for their release.’”

Bear in mind, the underlying principle of marriage [nikah] hinges on obtaining the consent of the woman, her guardian, and the man. However, in a situation where a woman has given up her freedom, is at no liberty, and belongs to those cruel warmongering folk who have perpetuated unwarranted oppression upon Muslim men and women, when such a woman is seized and reduced to a prisoner of war in retribution for the crimes of herself and her kinsfolk, her rights to freedom are completely forfeited. Consequently, she becomes the captive of the victorious ruler, and to bring such a woman into his prison does not necessitate her consent. But cohabiting with women without her consent is never permitted in Islam. Nonetheless, the Holy Quran delineates:

فَكُلُّ رَقْبَةٍ

““The freeing of a slave.” [Surah al-Balad, Ch.90: V.14]

““Hence, setting a bondwoman or prisoner free is declared as a deed of immense reward, and ordinary Muslims are encouraged to do so. If they liberate such bondwomen and slaves, they will secure great merit in the sight of God. Although a Muslim ruler holds the right to subjugate such malevolent individuals and reduce them to slavery or servitude upon triumph, responding to malevolence with benevolence is nonetheless preferred by God.

““It is a matter of great joy that in our era, those people who are referred to as disbelievers in opposition to Islam, have abandoned this practice of injustice and oppression. For this reason, it is now impermissible for Muslims as well to take their prisoners as bondwomen and slaves, because God states in the Holy Quran that you may retaliate against a combatant group to a degree, only when they have first taken the lead. Hence, when now such a time no longer exists and the disbelieving people do not act so violently and unjustly towards the Muslims in a state of war, whereby they themselves as well as their men and women are taken as bondwomen and slaves; rather, they are considered to be state prisoners, for this reason, in this era, it is now impermissible and unlawful for Muslims as well to do so.””

However, slavery had never been permitted in Islam, and only taking prisoners of war in the battlefield was allowed. But in this modern era, where millions of women are being pressured into becoming prostitutes in Europe and America, they are actually sex slaves who are being used as property. Perhaps, there will be a generation coming after us who will claim that America had eleven million slaves in prison, or Europe had hundreds of millions of women as slaves, because those women who are sex workers in this era are treated worse than the slaves of the past ages.

We like to tell ourselves that these people have willingly entered prostitution, but in reality, they are slaves who are forced to have sex with men or women, and it is therefore unjust, and Islam has no place for it.

Conclusion

Islam is the complete and comprehensive code of life which covers all aspects of human life from cradle to grave. Allah has created both male and female for worship and thralldom and to play distinct roles in the society but there is no superiority between them except on the ground of morality. Islam has guaranteed the rights of women in every sphere of life like men. It is only the religious which does not discriminate between men and women. It also does not allow the domination of men over women. In the Dark Age, when women were treated as material things and who had no rights and if the husband of a woman died during her lifetime, then she had to burn herself alive when the dead body was cremated and then Islam not only protected the women but also gave them right, dignity and honour. Islam does not impose any financial liability on the women rather ensuring her right of dower, maintenance and inheritance. Islam does not treat women “an instrument of the Devil”. In Islam, she has freedom to involve herself in any social and economic activities and even in politics. But in male dominated society of the world, some misconceptions are prevailing regarding women rights in Islam due to lack of proper religious knowledge, lack of awareness of women regarding their rights as given in Islam, the prevailing customs and also for dominating mentality of men. Sometimes to deprive the women or to dishonour the women or to blaspheme the women or for financial interest or for political interest, men practice some bad customs and claim these are the rules of Islam but Islam never supports these bad practices. Due to the lack of proper Islamic knowledge, sometimes women also blamed the Islam injustice to them or dishonoured them or deprived them. To know the rights of women in Islam and to understand the actual position of women in Islam and to eliminate the prevailing misconceptions regarding women’s rights in Islam, proper Islamic knowledge and awareness of women is essential and also necessary to change the dominating mentality of the men.

INTRODUCTION TO ISLAM:

The terms “Islam” and “Muslim” are ubiquitous and yet burdened with countless contradictory interpretations, misrepresentations, and erasures. Historically, the contemporary political climate or zeitgeist tends to determine how Islam is defined and who is given a platform to speak for its almost 2 billion adherents worldwide. The climate of post-9/11 America bears witness to such vilification and misrepresentations of Muslims and other minority groups. What is clear is that dehumanizing, othering, and stereotyping individuals, groups, and religions is rooted in either a lack of access to the given group or a reliance on misinformation and fringe examples. The fact that you are reading this book suggests that you have a curiosity and an open heart to learn and to grow. I pray that the chapters that follow help answer some of your most pressing questions about the foundations of Islam and its teachings. This book offers a comprehensive, though not exhaustive, survey of Islamic teachings. Each chapter deals with various aspects of Islamic belief, history, and practice. We will also discuss differences in opinion among Muslims as well as Muslim views on other religions. I’ve attempted to enliven the discussion with not just the surface-level details but also the inner and interior aims of these teachings. I hope this allows you to have a more complete understanding of what these teachings involve, how they are experienced by Muslims, and the spiritual possibilities they offer. The content is informed primarily by Islam’s holy scripture, the Koran, as well as those narrations that are widely known and align with scholarly considerations. For readers interested in these narrations, the suggested readings will contain the cited narrations in this text. Lastly, a balanced and nuanced reading of history is employed to represent the historical narrative. I am deeply inspired by these opportunities to use the energy and potential of religion to bring people together in a way that informs, unites, and activates us all to be and do better. We must strive to soften ourselves to the challenges of the human condition and increase our concern for one another—to combat the immense selfishness and despair that have permeated much of the world. For too long, there have been voices vociferously inciting people toward dehumanization and othering. The results of many of these acts and incitements—whether by individuals, groups, or states—have been violence and war. I’ve experienced, witnessed,

and studied the destruction and pain that results from war and the trauma it leaves behind. This trauma is passed on from generation to generation. It's time for a fresh imagination, a purified intention, and vision toward a new reality sustained in knowledge, wisdom, and compassionate grace that enables us to look at one another with the gaze of kindness and humanity. If this book helps move us even one step toward this, then I have, with the grace of God, achieved my intention. No human endeavour is perfect. Any shortcomings in this work are mine, and any goodness you see in this work is a reflection of your state. I hope this is a work that you read more than once. I thank you for your time and this connection. Wherever you are and whoever you are, may goodness reach you.

From the beginning of time, the Muslims showed no interest either in imposing Islam or in creating a uniform legal and political system; Christians and Jews were left to govern themselves by their own laws, and the conquerors kept to their military encampments, guardians of the peace. But the proud and ancient empire of the Persians remained impregnable, or so it seemed. A group of young Muslims came to Court and called upon the Great King, Yazdagird, to embrace Islam; amused by their effrontery he sent them home with gifts of Persian earth to carry on their heads — that was as much of his territory as he was prepared to surrender to these upstarts.

Who is God?

At the heart of Islam stands the reality of God, the One, the Absolute and the Infinite, the Infinitely Good and All-Merciful, the One Who is at once transcendent and immanent, greater than all we can conceive or imagine, yet, as the Koran, the sacred scripture of Islam, attests, closer to us than our jugular vein. The One God, known by His Arabic Name, Allah, is the central reality of Islam in all of its facets, and attestation to this oneness, which is called tawheed, is the axis around which all that is Islamic revolves. Allah is beyond all duality and relationality, beyond the differences of gender and of all qualities that distinguish beings from each other in this world. Yet He is the source of all existence and all cosmic and human qualities as well as the End to Whom all things return. To testify to this oneness lies at the heart of the credo of Islam, and the formula that expresses the truth of this oneness, *Lā ilāha illa'Llāh*, “There is no god but God,” is the first of two testification (*shahādahs*) by which a person bears witness to being a Muslim; the second is *Muhammadun rasūl Allāh*, “Muhammad is the messenger of God.”

Sunni Islam has always set great store by political stability, even if this involves tolerating corrupt government, for revolt against constituted authority involves splitting the community, and the unity of the community is the paramount consideration; moreover, what the religion requires for its full practice is not ideal government, efficient administration or even ‘social justice’, but a stable environment, a house with solid walls in which the furnishings stay in place. Ibn ‘Abbas reported God’s Messenger as saying: ‘If anyone sees in his ruler what he dislikes he should show patience, for no one separates a span’s distance from the community and [then] dies without his dying like the people of pre-Islamic times.’

The oneness of God is for Muslims not only the heart of their religion, but that of every authentic religion. It is a reassertion of the revelation of God to the Hebrew prophets and to Christ, whom Muslims also consider to be their prophets, the revelation of the truth that “The Lord is one,” the reconfirmation of that timeless truth that is also stated in the Catholic creed, *Credo in unum Deum*, “I believe in one God.” As the Koran states, “We have never sent a messenger before thee except that We revealed to him, saying, ‘There is no god but I, so worship Me’” (21:25). Like countless Muslims, when I read the names of the prophets of old in the Koran or in the traditional prayers, I experience them as living realities in the Islamic universe, while being fully conscious of the fact that they are revered figures in Judaism and Christianity. I also remain fully aware that they are all speaking of the same God Who is One and not of some other deity. The One God, or Allah, is neither male nor female. However, in the inner teachings of Islam His Essence is often referred to in feminine form and the Divinity is often mentioned as the Beloved, while the Face He has turned to the world as Creator and Sustainer is addressed in the masculine form. Both the male and the female are created by Him and the root of both femininity and masculinity are to be found in the Divine Nature, which transcends the duality between them. Furthermore, the Qualities of God, which are reflected throughout creation, are of a feminine as well as a masculine nature, and the traditional Islamic understanding of the Divinity is not at all confined, as some think, to a purely patriarchal image. The Koran, which is the verbatim Word of God for Muslims, to be compared to Christ himself in Christianity, reveals not only the Supreme Name of God as Allah, but also mentions other “beautiful Names” of God, considered by traditional sources to be ninety-nine in number, Names revealing different aspects of the Divinity.

As with man's nature, so with the world. 'For the world', says the Tao Te Ching, 'is a divine vessel; it cannot be shaped. He who shapes it damages it; he who grasps at it, loses it'. Do not tamper with the world or with men's hearts, says Chuang Tzu, and let your love be so unobtrusive, so undemanding, so unwilling to interfere, that it passes unnoticed and its beneficent influence works unobserved. Most of our interference, he adds, is like 'trying to stop an echo by shouting at it'. Or like a child, we might say, whose efforts to erase a mark he has made on the carpet, make it ten times worse. When we have sown confusion, we cannot be too careful in using the very methods that brought it about in the effort to remedy it. The Koran states, "To God belong the most beautiful Names (al-asmā' al-husnā). Call on Him thereby" (7:180). These Names are divided into those of Perfection (Kamāl), Majesty (Jalāl), and Beauty (Jamāl), the first relating to the essential oneness of God Himself beyond all polarization and the last two to the masculine and feminine dimensions of reality in divines (in the Divine Order). The Names of Majesty include the Just, the Majestic, the Reckoner, the Giver of Death, the Victorious, and the All-Powerful, and those of Beauty, the All-Merciful, the Forgiver, the Gentle, the Generous, the Beautiful, and Love. For Muslims the whole universe consists of the reflection in various combinations of the Divine Names, and human life is lived amid the polarizations and tensions as well as harmony of the cosmic and human qualities derived from these Names. God at once judges us according to His Justice and forgives us according to His Mercy. He is far beyond our reach, yet resides at the centre of the heart of the faithful. He punishes the wicked, but also loves His creatures and forgives them. The doctrine of God the One, as stated in the Koran, does not only emphasize utter transcendence, although there are powerful expressions of this truth such as Allāhu akbar, usually translated as "God is great," but meaning that God is greater than anything we can conceive of Him, which is also attested by the apophatic theology of both the Catholic and Orthodox churches as well as by traditional Judaism. The Koran also accentuates God's nearness to us, stating that He is closer to us than ourselves and that He is present everywhere, as when it states: "Whithersoever ye turn, there is the Face of God" (2:115). The traditional religious life of a Muslim is based on a rhythmic movement between the poles of transcendence and immanence, of rigor and compassion, of justice and forgiveness, of the fear of punishment and hope for mercy based on God's love for us. But the galaxy of Divine Names and the multiplicity of Divine Qualities reflected in the cosmos and within the being of men and women do not distract the Muslim for one moment from the oneness of God, from that Sun before whose light all multiplicity perishes. Striving after the realization of that oneness, or tawhīd, is the heart of Islamic life; and the measure of a successful religious life is the degree to which one is able to realize tawhīd, which means not only oneness, but also the integration of multiplicity into Unity. Moreover, since there is no official sacerdotal authority in Islam like the magisterium in Roman Catholic Christianity, the authenticity of one's faith in Islam has by and large been determined by the testification of tawhīd, while the degree of inward realization of this truth has remained a matter to be decided by God and not by external authorities. This has been the general norm in Islamic history, but there have also been exceptions, and there are historical instances when a particular group or political authority has taken it upon itself to determine the authenticity or lack thereof of the belief in tawhīd of a particular person or school. But there has never been an Inquisition in Islam, and there has been greater latitude in the acceptance of ideas, especially mystical and esoteric ones, than in most periods of the history of Western Christianity before the penetration of modernism into Christian theology itself. Now, although Islam is based on the reality of God, the One, in His Absoluteness and Suchness, it also addresses humanity in its essential reality, in its suchness. Man, in the traditional sense of the term corresponding to insān in Arabic or homo in Greek and not solely the male, is seen in Islam not as a sinful being to whom the message of Heaven is sent to heal the wound of the original sin, but as a being who still carries his primordial nature (al-fitrah) within himself, although he has forgotten that nature now buried deep under layers of negligence.

As the Koran states: "[God] created man in the best of stature (ahsan al-taqwīm)" (95:4) with an intelligence capable of knowing the One. The message of Islam is addressed to that primordial nature. It is a call for recollection, for the remembrance of a knowledge kneaded into the very substance of our being even before our coming into this world. In a famous verse that defines the relationship between human beings and God, the Koran, in referring to the precosmic existence of man, states, "Am I not your Lord?" They said: 'Yes, we bear witness' (7:172). The "they" refers to all the children of Adam, male and female, and the "yes" confirms the affirmation of God's Oneness by us in our pre-eternal ontological reality. Men and women still bear the echo of this "yes" deep down within their souls, and the call of Islam is precisely to this primordial nature, which uttered the "yes" even before the creation of the heavens and the earth. The call of Islam therefore concerns, above all, the remembrance of a knowledge deeply embedded in our being, the confirmation of a knowledge that saves, hence the soteriological function of knowledge in Islam. Islam addresses the human being not primarily as will, but as intelligence. If the great sin in Christianity is disobedience, which has warped the will, the great sin in Islam is forgetfulness and the resulting inability of the intelligence to function in the way that God created it as the means to know the One. That is why the greatest sin in

Islam and the only one God does not forgive is shirk, or taking a partner unto God, which means denying the Oneness of God, or *tawhīd*. This direct address from God, the One, to each human being in its primordial state requires total surrender to the Majesty of the Absolute, before whom ultimately nothing can in fact exist. In an ordinary sense it means the surrender of ourselves to God, and in the highest sense it means the awareness of our nothingness before Him, for, as the Koran says, “All that dwells in the heavens and the earth perishes, yet there abideth the Face of thy Lord, Majestic, Splendid.” (55:26-27). The very name of the religion, Islam, comes from this reality, for the Arabic word *al-islām* means “surrender” as well as the peace that issues from our surrender to God. In fact, Islam is the only major religion, along with Buddhism (if we consider the name of the religion to come from Budd, the Divine Intellect, and not the Buddha), whose name is not related to a person or ethnic group, but to the central idea of the religion. Moreover, Islam considers all authentic religions to be based on this surrender, so that *al-islām* means not only the religion revealed through the Koran to the Prophet Muhammad, but all authentic religions as such. That is why in the Koran the prophet Abraham is also called muslim, that is, one who is in the state of *al-islām*. True surrender is not, however, only concerned with our will. It must involve our whole being. A shallow understanding of surrender can lead to either a passive attitude, in which one does not strive in life as one should according to the promulgations of the religion, or to mistaking one’s own imperfect understanding of Islam for the truth and performing acts that are against God’s teachings while claiming that one is acting in surrender to God. Islam states that a person must be the perfect servant (*‘abd*) of God in the sense of following His commands. But since God has given us many faculties, including free will and intelligence, our surrender must be complete and total, not limited to only certain faculties. It must involve the whole of our being. Otherwise, hidden thoughts and emotions as well as false ideas can combine with a fallacious sense of external surrender of one’s will to God to produce acts in the name of religion that can have calamitous consequences. Such acts have appeared from time to time historically and can be seen especially in this day and age, but they are deviations rather than the norm. The norm by which the vast majority of Muslims have lived over the ages has meant surrender to God with one’s whole being, following the Divine Law and the ethical teachings of Islam to the extent possible, striving in life according to religious teachings to the extent of one’s ability, and then being resigned to consequences that ensue and accepting what destiny has put before us. It is in this sense that the common Arabic saying *maktab*, “It is written,” marking the sign of resignation to a particular event or results of one’s actions, must be understood. This surrender has certainly not meant either fatalism or an individualistic interpretation of Divine norms in the name of surrender. It has, on the contrary, led to an inward and outward striving combined with serenity that characterizes traditional patterns of Islamic life, in contrast to both modernistic and much of the so-called fundamentalist currents found in the Islamic world today.

CREATION OF THE WORLD AND OF HUMAN BEINGS:

Since the One God is Infinite and Absolute as well as the Infinitely Good, He could not but create. His infinitude implies that He contains within Himself all possibilities, including that of negating Himself, and this possibility had to be realized in the form of creation. Moreover, as St. Augustine also stated, it is in the nature of the good to give of itself, and the Infinitely-Good could not but radiate the reality that constitutes the world and, in fact, all the worlds. But creation or radiation implies separation, and it is this ontological separation from the Source of all goodness that constitutes evil. One might say that evil is nothing but separation from the Good and privation, although it is real on its own level, in a sense as real as our own existential level on which we find it. And yet the good belongs to the pole of being and evil to that of nonbeing. Throughout the history of Islam there have been numerous profound metaphysical and theological discussions concerning the question of evil, as there have been in other religions, especially Christianity. But in contrast to the modern West, in which many people have turned away from God and religion because they could not understand how a God who is good could create a world in which there is evil, in the Islamic world this question of theodicy has hardly ever bothered the religious conscience of even the most intelligent people or turned them away from God. The emphasis of the Koran upon the reality of evil on the moral plane combined with the sapiential and theological explanations of this question have kept men and women confronted with this problem in the domain of faith. The strong emphasis in Islam on the Will of God has also played a role in resigning Muslims to the presence of evil in the world (which they must nevertheless combat to the extent possible), even when they cannot understand the causes involved. In any case, God has created the world, in which there is imperfection and evil, but the world itself is considered by the Koran to be good, a view corresponding to that found in the book of Genesis. And creation has a purpose, for, as the Koran says, “O Lord, Thou didst not create this [the world] in vain” (8:190). The deepest purpose of creation is explained by a famous *hadīth qudsī* (a sacred saying of the Prophet not part of the Koran in which God speaks in the first person through the mouth of the Prophet): “I was a hidden treasure. I loved to be known. Therefore, I created the creation so that I would be known.” The purpose of

creation therefore is God's love for the knowledge of Himself realized through His central agent on earth, humanity. For a human being to know God is to fulfill the purpose of creation. Moreover, God loved to be known. Hence, the love of God and by God permeates the whole universe, and many Islamic mystics of Sufis over the ages have spoken of that love to which Dante refers at the end of the Divine Comedy when he speaks of "the love that moves the sun and the stars." This sacred hadith (hadith qudsi) also speaks of God's being "a hidden treasure," which is a symbol of the truth that everything in the universe has its origin in the Divine Reality and is a manifestation of that Reality. Everything in the total cosmos both visible and invisible is a theophany, or manifestation, of the Divine Names and Qualities and is drawn from the "treasury" of God. The Wisdom of God thus permeates the universe, and Muslims in fact see the cosmos as God's primordial revelation. Everything in the universe, in reflecting God's Wisdom, also glorifies Him, for, as the Koran says, "There is nothing but that it hymns His praise" (17:44). In fact, the very existence of beings is nothing but their invocation of God's Names, and the universe itself is nothing but the consequence of the breathing upon the archetypal realities of all beings in the Divine Intellect of the Breath of the Compassionate (nafas al-Rahmān). It is through His Name al-Rahmān, which means the Infinitely-Good and also Merciful, that the universe has come into being. It is significant to note that much of the Koran is devoted to the cosmos and the world of nature, which play an integral role in the traditional life of Muslims. All Islamic rites are harmonized with natural phenomena, and in general Muslims view the world of creation as God's first revelation, before the Torah, the Gospels, the Koran, and other sacred scriptures were revealed. That is why in Islam, as in medieval Judaism and Christianity, the cosmos is seen as a book in which the "signs of God," the vestigia Dei of Christian authors, are to be read. The Islamic understanding of anthropogenesis, the creation of human beings, resembles those of Judaism and Christianity in many ways, but also differs on certain significant issues. In fact, there are also important differences between Judaism and Christianity when it comes to the question of original sin. As for Adam's original creation, the Koran speaks of God creating Adam from clay and breathing His Spirit into him, "And I breathed into him My Spirit" (15:29). The Koran continues: And when thy Lord said unto the angels: "Verily! I am about to place a vicegerent (khalifah) on earth," they said, "Wilt Thou place therein one who will bring corruption therein and will shed blood, while we, we hymn Thy praise and sanctify Thee?" He said: "Surely, I know that which ye know not." And He taught Adam all the names, then showed them to the angels, saying: "Inform me of the names of these, if ye are truthful." They said: "Be glorified! We have no knowledge save that which Thou hast taught us." (2:30-32)2 The angels were then asked by God to prostrate before Adam, and all did so except Iblīs, that is, the Devil or Satan, who refused because of pride. God placed Adam and his wife in paradise and permitted them to eat of the fruits there, except the fruit of the forbidden tree. But Satan "caused them to deflect therefrom," and the Fall ensued. But a revelation was sent to Adam. He repented and became the first prophet as well as the father of humanity. The Koranic account contains all the main features of the sacred anthropology of Islam and its view of the nature of men and women. First of all, God chose the human being as His vicegerent (khalifah) on earth, which means that He has given human beings power to dominate the earth, but on the condition that they remain obedient to God, that is, being God's servant, or 'abd Allāh. There are numerous Koranic references to this truth. The two primary features of being human are servanthood and vicegerency: being passive toward Heaven in submission to God's Will, on the one hand, and being active as God's agent and doing His Will in the world, on the other. Moreover, Adam was taught all the names, which means that God has placed within human nature an intelligence that is central and the means by which he can know all things. It also means that human beings themselves are the theophany, or visible manifestation, of all of God's Names. There is in principle no limit to human intelligence in knowing the nature of things (the question of knowing the Divine Essence is a different matter) unless there is an obstacle that prevents it from functioning correctly. That is why Muslims believe that any normal and wholesome intelligence will be naturally led to the confirmation of Divine Oneness and are at a loss when rationalist sceptics from the West refuse to accept the One (most Muslims are unaware of the obstacles in the soul of such a sceptic that reduce the intelligence to analytical reason and prevent it from functioning in its fullness). Adam, the prototype of humanity, is superior to the angels by virtue of his knowledge of the names of all things as well as by being the reflection of all the Divine Names and Qualities. As for Iblīs, his rebellion comes from pride in considering his nature, which was made of fire, superior to that of Adam, who was made of clay. He refused to prostrate himself before Adam, because fire is a more noble element than earth or clay. He could not see the effect of the Spirit that God had breathed into Adam. Satan was therefore the first to misuse analogy, to try to replace intelligence with ordinary logical reasoning. His fall was thus also connected to the domain of knowledge. The lack of total knowledge on his part created the sense of pride, which in Islam, as in Christianity, is the source of all other vices. The Koran mentions Adam's wife, but not her name. Hadith sources however confirm that her name was hawwā', or Eve. In fact, the Islamic names for the first parents of humanity, ādām and hawwā', are the same as in Judaism and Christianity. The Koran, however, does not mention how she was created. Some traditional commentators have repeated the biblical account of her creation from Adam's rib, while other authorities have mentioned that she was

created from the same clay from which God created Adam. It is important to note for the Islamic understanding of womanhood and women's roles in both religious and social life that, in contrast to the biblical story, Eve did not tempt Adam to eat the forbidden fruit. Rather, they were tempted together by Iblīs and therefore Eve was not the cause of Adam's expulsion from paradise. He was also responsible; they shared in performing the act that led to their fall, and therefore both men and women are faced equally with its consequences. As far as the forbidden fruit is concerned, again, the Koran does not mention it explicitly, but according to traditional commentaries it was not an apple, as believed by Christians and Jews, but wheat. The creation of human beings complements the creation of the cosmos and adds to the created order a central being who is God's vicegerent, capable of knowing all things, of dominating the earth, given the power to do good, but also to wreak havoc and, in fact, corrupt the earth. According to a famous Hadīth, "God created man upon His form," although here form does not mean physical image, but rather the reflection of God's Names and Qualities. But human beings are also given the freedom to rebel against God, and Iblīs can exercise power over them. The human being contains, in fact, all possibilities within himself or herself. The soul itself is a vast field in which the signs of God are manifested. As a Koranic verse states, "We shall show them our signs (āyāt) upon the horizons and within their souls until it becomes manifest unto them that it is the truth" (41:53). Therefore, in a sense, the human being is itself a revelation like the macrocosm. It might be said that from the Islamic point of view creation and revelation are inseparable, and that there are in fact three grand revelations: the cosmos, the human state, and religions—all three of which Islam sees as "books." There is, first of all, the cosmic book to be read and deciphered. Then there is the inner book of the soul, which we carry within ourselves. And finally there are sacred scriptures, which have been sent by God through His Mercy to guide humanity throughout the ages and which are the foundations of various religions and keys for reading the other two books, that of the cosmos and that of the soul.

MANY REVELATIONS, MANY PROPHETS:

In the Islamic perspective, the oneness of God has as its consequence not the uniqueness of prophecy, but its multiplicity, since God as the Infinite created a world in which there is multiplicity and this includes, of course, the human order. For Islam, revelation and prophecy are both necessary and universal. Humanity, according to the Koran, was created from a single soul, but then diversified into races and tribes, for, as the Koran states, "He created you [humanity] from a single soul" (39:6). The single origin of humanity implies the profound unity within diversity of human nature, and therefore religion based on the message of Divine Oneness could not have been only meant for or available to a segment of humanity. The multiplicity of races, nations, and tribes necessitates the diversity of revelations. Therefore, the Koran, on the one hand, asserts that "To every people [We have sent] a messenger" (10:48), and, on the other hand, "For each [people] We have appointed a Divine Law and a way. Had God willed, He could have made you one community. But that He may try you by that which He hath given you. So vie with one another in good works. Unto God ye will all return, and He will then inform you concerning that wherein ye differed" (5:48). According to these and other verses, not only is the multiplicity of religions necessary, but it is also a reflection of the richness of the Divine Nature and is willed by God. Religion (dīn), revelation (wahy), and prophecy (nubuwwah) have a clear meaning in the context of the Islamic worldview and therefore need to be carefully defined in the modern context, where all of these terms have become ambiguous in ordinary discourse. The closest word to the English term "religion" in Arabic is dīn, which is said by many to have been derived from the root meaning "to obey, submit, and humble oneself before God." Al-dīn means religion in the vastest sense as the sacred norm into which the whole of life is to be moulded. It is the total way of life grounded in teachings that have issued from God. These teachings reach humanity through revelation, which means the direct conveying of a message from Heaven (revelation being understood apart from all the psychological entanglements it has acquired in much of modern Western religious thought). Revelation, moreover, must not be confused with inspiration (ilhām), which is possible for all human beings. Islam sees revelation not as incarnation in the Hindu or Christian sense, but as the descent of the Word of God in the form of sacred scripture to a prophet. In fact, the Koran uses the term "Book" (kitāb) not only for the Koran, but also for all other sacred books and the totality of revelations. The Koran considers all revelations to be contained in that "archetypal book," or Umm al-kitāb (literally, "the Mother Book"), and the sacred scriptures to be related in conveying the same basic message of the primordial religion of unity in different languages and contexts. As the Koran states, "We never sent a messenger save with the language of his people" (14:4). Even when the Koran states that "the religion with God is al-islām" (3:19) or similar statements, al-islām refers to that universal surrender to the One and that primordial religion contained in the heart of all heavenly inspired religions, not just to Islam in its more particular sense. There is, moreover, a criterion of truth and falsehood as far as religions are concerned, and the Koran's confirmation of the universality of revelation does not mean that everything that has passed as religion yesterday or does so today is authentic. Throughout history there have been

false prophets and religions, to which Christ also referred, as well as religions that have decayed or deviated from their original form. Islam sees itself as heir to this long chain of prophets going back to Adam and believes all of them, considered to be 124,000 according to tradition, to be also its own. It does not believe, however, that it has inherited their teachings through temporal and historical transmission, for a prophet owes nothing to anyone and receives everything from Heaven, but it does believe that its message bears the finality of a seal. Islam sees itself as at once the primordial religion, a return to the original religion of oneness, and the final religion; the Koran itself calls the Prophet of Islam the “Seal of Prophets.” And, in fact, fourteen hundred years of history have confirmed Islam’s claim, for during all that time there has not been another plenary manifestation of the Truth like the ones that brought about the births of Buddhism and Christianity, not to speak of the earlier major religions. The two characteristics of primordiality and finality have bestowed upon Islam its trait of universality and the capability to absorb intellectually and culturally so much that came before it. It has also made spiritually alive the prophetic presences that preceded it, so that, for example, such figures as Abraham, Moses, and Christ play a much greater role in the spiritual universe of Islam than Abraham and Moses do in the Christian universe. While speaking of the finality of the Islamic revelation for this cycle of human history, which will last until the eschatological events at the end of historic time, something must be said, from the Islamic point of view, about the “order” and “economy” of revelation. Muslims believe that each revelation takes place through the Divine Will, but also on the basis of a spiritual economy and is not by any means *ad hoc*. Each revelation fulfills a major function in human history seen from the religious point of view. For example, around the sixth to fifth century B.C. which also marks the transition from mythological time to historic time, a qualitative change took place in the march of time, which for Islam, as for Hinduism, is not simply linear. This is the period when the myths of Homer and Hesiod recede as Greek history flowers and the stories of mythical Persian dynasties are left behind as the Persian Empire takes shape. From the human point of view, this qualitative change in the terrestrial life of humanity required new dispensations from Heaven, and from the metaphysical perspective, these new dispensations themselves marked the new chapter that was to begin in human history. This period, which philosophers such as Karl Jaspers have called the Axial Age, was witness to the appearance of Confucius and Lao-Tze in China and the new crystallization of the primal Chinese tradition into Confucianism and Taoism, and the appearance of Shintoism in Japan and the beginning of the terrestrial life of the solar emperors, who marked the beginning of historical Japanese civilization. This age was also witness to the life of the Buddha, whose teaching spread throughout India and Tibet and soon transformed the religious life of East and Southeast Asia. At nearly the same time, we see the rise of Zoroaster, who established Zoroastrianism in Persia and whose teachings greatly influenced later religious life in western Asia. Finally, around the same time we have the rise of Pythagoras and Pythagoreanism, which was central to the spiritual life of ancient Greece and from which Platonism was born. This remarkable cluster of figures, which also includes some of the Hebrew prophets, figures whom Muslims would call prophets, transformed the religious life of humanity, although the still living and viable religions of the earlier period such as Judaism and Hinduism survived. Moreover, this list of figures does not exhaust all the notable sages and prophets of the Axial Age. One would think that the cycle of revelation would have been terminated in the Axial Age. But the decadence of the Greek and Roman religions around the Mediterranean Basin and the weakening of the northern European religions created a vacuum that only a new revelation could fill. Therefore, Christianity was revealed by God. Although originally a Semitic religion, providentially it soon became, to some extent, Hellenized, and Christ was transformed almost into an “Aryan” solar hero for the Europeans, who were destined to find the path of salvation through this new dispensation from Heaven. It certainly was no accident that in Europe Christianity remained strong and unified, while in the eastern Mediterranean and North Africa, destined to become part of the future “Abode of Islam,” it splintered into numerous small denominations fighting among themselves as well as against Byzantium. This latter situation, added to the inner weakness of Zoroastrianism in the Persian Empire and certain other religions elsewhere, created another vacuum to be filled, this time by a new Semitic religion—Islam. Islam, like Judaism, remained faithful to its Semitic origin, but, like Christianity, was not confined to a particular ethnic group. Islam thus came to reassert the full doctrine of Divine Oneness on a universal scale after the Axial Age and the appearance of Christianity, placing in a sense the last golden brick in that golden wall that is revelation. With it, the structure of the wall became complete, and, as far as Muslims are concerned, although small religious movements may take place here and there, there is to be no plenary revelation after Islam according to the Divine Providence and the spiritual economy of God’s plans for present-day humanity. When asked how they know such a truth, Muslims point to the Koran itself and the fact that no previous revelation had ever made such an explicit claim. Being the final religion of this cycle, Islam is not only closely related to its sister monotheisms, Judaism and Christianity, but also possesses an inward link to the religions of the Axial Age as well as to Hinduism. It is this link that made it easier for Islam than for Christianity to incorporate so much of the wisdom Hinduism and of the religions of the Axial Age, from Buddhism and Pythagoreanism to Zoroastrianism and even later to Confucianism, within its sapiential perspective. Paradoxically,

the insistence of Islam upon God as the One and the Absolute has had as its concomitant the acceptance of multiplicity of prophets and revelations, and no sacred scripture is more universalist in its understanding of religion than the Koran, whose perspective concerning the universality of revelation may be called “vertical triumphalism.” In contrast, in Christianity, because of the emphasis on the Triune God, God the One is seen more in terms of the relationality of the three Hypostases, what one might call “Divine Relativity”; the vision of the manifestation of the Divine then became confined to the unique Son and Incarnation, in whom the light of all previous prophets was absorbed. In Christianity the vision is that of the Triune God and a unique message of salvation and saviour, hence extra ecclesiam nulla salus (no salvation outside the church), whereas in Islam there is the One God and many prophets. Here is to be found the major difference between how Muslims have viewed Jews and Christians over the centuries and how Christians have regarded Jews and Muslims as well as followers of other religions. For Muslims, the Koran completes the message of previous sacred texts without in any way denigrating their significance. In fact, the Torah and the Gospels are mentioned by name as sacred scriptures along with the Koran in the text of the Koran. Likewise, although the Prophet terminates the long chain of prophecy, the earlier prophets lose none of their spiritual significance. Rather, they appear in the Islamic firmament as stars, while the Prophet is like the moon in that Islamic sky.

The obstacles are, as we have seen, formidable, but the survival of that sector of humanity which still acknowledges that religious faith has a right to exist may yet depend upon these obstacles being overcome. A reconciliation with Islam, on the political as well as the religious level, is now essential to the future of the West and should be amongst its highest priorities. Precise figures cannot be established, but it seems likely that there are now at least one billion Muslims and this represents, to say the least, a decisive weight to be placed in the scales of the balance of power. The Ummah is divided by national boundaries and national rivalries but, at the grass-roots from Morocco to Indonesia, the sense of unity and of common interest has survived the vicissitudes of history and is still the primary focus of the peoples’ loyalty.

‘Thus have we appointed you,’ says the Koran, ‘a middle nation’ (or ‘a community of the middle way’), ‘so that you may bear witness to the truth before mankind ...’ (Q.2.143). Islam is a ‘middle nation’ even in the purely geographical sense, spanning as it does the centre-line of the planet; a ‘nation’ which is the heir to ancient and universal truths, and to principles of social and human stability (often betrayed but never forgot- ten) of which our chaotic world has desperate need; a nation which witnesses to a hope that transcends the dead ends against which the contemporary world is battering itself to death.

In the midst of a humanity polarized between East and West, North and South, Islam represents both a connecting link and a centre of gravity. Division, defeat, subjection and political confusion have not entirely destroyed the Muslims’ sense of priorities. ‘In a world of materialism, hedonism and technology,’ wrote a Jesuit priest recently in The Times of London, ‘the Islamic masses still contrive to make God and not technology the central certainty of their lives ... Meanwhile, between Marxism and Americanism, the choice must sometimes seem a poor one to people who decided long ago, and have seen fit to stand by their decision, that man cannot live by bread alone...’!

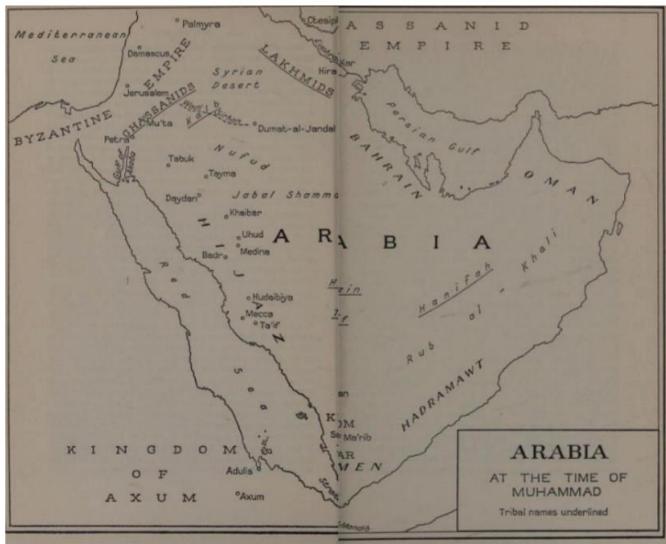
Everywhere today we see the dislocation produced by the impact of the modern West upon beliefs and cultural patterns which could not survive the encounter; whole peoples now exist in a spiritual and psychological vacuum.

WHAT IS THE KORAN?

The sacred scripture of Islam, known in Arabic by many names, of which the most famous is al-Qur’ān, “the Recitation,” is considered by all Muslims, no matter to which school they belong, as the verbatim revelation of God’s Word made to descend into the heart, soul, and mind of the Prophet of Islam through the agency of the archangel of revelation, Gabriel, or Jibrīl in Arabic. Both the words and meaning of the text are considered to be sacred, as is everything else connected with it, such as the chanting of its verses or the calligraphy of its phrases.

Muslims are born with verses of the Book, which Muslims call the Noble Koran, read into their ears, live throughout their lives hearing its verses and also repeating certain of its chapters during daily prayers, are married with the accompaniment of Koranic recitations, and die hearing it chanted beside them. The Koran (also known as the Koran in English) is the central theophany of Islam, the fundamental source of its metaphysics, cosmology, theology, law, ethics, sacred history, and general worldview. In a way the soul of the traditional Muslim is like a mosaic made up of phrases of the Koran, which are repeated throughout life, such as the basmalah, “In the Name of God, the Infinitely Good, the All-Merciful,” with which all legitimate acts begin and are consecrated; alhamduli’Llāh, “Praise be to God,” with which one terminates an act or event in the attitude of gratefulness; inshā’ā’Llāh, “If God wills,” which accompanies every utterance concerning the future, for the future is in God’s Hands and nothing takes place save through His Will. Even the daily greeting of Muslims, al-salāmu ‘alaykum, “Peace be upon you,” which the Prophet taught to his companions as the greeting of the people of paradise, comes from the Koran. As some Western scholars of Islam have noted, there is perhaps no single book that is as influential in any religion as the Koran is in Islam. To fully understand the significance of the Koran, a Westerner with a Christian background should realize that, although the Koran can in a sense be compared to the Old and New Testaments, a more profound comparison would be with Christ himself. In Christianity both the spirit and body of Christ are sacred, and he is considered the Word of God. The Koran is likewise for Muslims the Word of God (kalimat Allāh), and both its inner meaning, or spirit, and its body, or outer form, the text in the Arabic language in which it was revealed, are sacred to Muslims. Arabic is the sacred language of Islam and Koranic Arabic plays a role in Islam analogous to the role of the body of Christ in Christianity. Moreover, as Christians consume bread and wine as symbols of the flesh and blood of Christ, Muslims pronounce, using the same organ of the body, that is, the mouth, the Word of God in the daily prayers. The rationalist and agnostic methods of higher criticism applied by certain Western scholars to the text of the Koran, which was not compiled over a long period of time like the Old and the New Testaments, is as painful and as much a blasphemy to Muslims as it would be to believing Christians if some Muslim archeologists claimed to have discovered some physical remain of Christ and were using DNA analysis to determine whether he was born miraculously or was the son of Joseph. In any case, for Muslims themselves, Sunni and Shi’ite alike, there is but a single text of the Koran consisting of 114 chapters of over 6,000 verses revealed to the Prophet of Islam in Mecca and Medina over the twenty-three years of his prophetic mission. As verses were received and then uttered by him, they would be memorized by companions, who were Arabs with prodigious memories. The verses were also written down by scribes. The order of the chapters of the Koran was also given by the Prophet through Divine command. During the caliphate of the third caliph, ‘Uthmān, some twenty years after the death of the Prophet, as many of those who had memorized the Koran were dying in various battles, the complete text of the Koran was copied in several manuscripts and sent to the four corners of the Islamic world. Later copies are based on this early definitive collection. It is said in Islam that God gives to each prophet a miracle corresponding to what was important in his time. Since magic was so significant in Egypt, God gave Moses the power to turn his staff into a serpent. Since medicine was such an important art at the time of Christ, God gave him the miracle of raising the dead to life. And since poetic eloquence was the most prized of all virtues for pre-Islamic Arabs, God revealed through the Prophet by far the most eloquent of all Arabic works. In fact, the greatest miracle of Islam is said to be the eloquence of the Koran. Its eloquence not only moved the heart and soul of those Arabs of the seventh century who first heard it, but also moves to tears Muslim believers throughout the world today, even those whose mother tongue is not Arabic, although Arabic is the language of daily prayers for all Muslims, Arab and non-Arab alike. The grace, or barakah (corresponding both etymologically and in meaning to the Hebrew barak), of the text transcends its mental message and moves souls toward God in much the same way that hearing Gregorian chant in Latin would for centuries in the West deeply affect even those who did not understand the Latin words. Of course, the same can be said for the Latin Mass itself, whose beautiful liturgy was of the deepest significance for some fifteen hundred years even for those Catholics who did not know Latin. The Koran has many names, each revealing an aspect of its reality. It is al-Qur’ān, or “recitation,” which also means “gathering” or “concentration.” It is al-Furqān, or “discernment,” because it provides the criteria for discerning between truth and falsehood, goodness and evil, beauty and ugliness. It is Umm al-kitāb, the archetypal book containing the root of all knowledge, and it is al-Hudā, the guide for the journey of men and women toward God. For Muslims, the Koran is the source of all knowledge both outward and inward, the foundation of the Law, the final guide for ethical behaviour, and a net with which the Divine Fisherman ensnares the human soul and brings it back to Unity. The Koran contains several grand themes. First of all, it deals with the nature of reality, with the Divine Reality and Its relation to the realm of relativity. Second, the Koran says much about the natural world, and in a sense the Islamic sector of the cosmos participates in the Koranic revelation. Then the Koran contains many pages on sacred history, but the episodes of this history are recounted more for their significance as lessons for the inner life of the soul than as historical accounts of ages past. Sacred history in the Koran contains, above all, moral and spiritual lessons for us here and now. The Koran also deals with laws for the

individual and society and is the most important source of Islamic Law, or the Sharī‘ah. Furthermore, the Koran comes back again and again to the question of ethics, of good and evil, of the significance of living a virtuous life. Finally, the Koran speaks, especially in its last chapters, in majestic language about eschatological events, about the end of this world, about the Day of Judgment, paradise, purgatory, and hell. The language of the Koran, especially in dealing with eschatological realities, is concrete and symbolic, not abstract, or descriptive in the ordinary sense, which would in any case be impossible when one is dealing with realities our earthly imaginations cannot grasp. This trait has caused many outsiders to criticize the Koran for its sensuous description of the delights of paradise as if they were simply a sublimation of earthly joys and pleasures. In reality every joy and delight here below, especially sexuality, which is sacred for Islam, is the reflection of a paradisal prototype, not vice versa. According to the Prophet and many of the earliest authorities such as ‘Ali and Ja‘far al-Sādiq, the Koran has many levels of meaning, of which the highest is known to God alone. In the same way that God is both the Outward (al-żāhir) and the Inward (al-Bātin), His Book also has an outward and an inward dimension or, in fact, several levels of inner meaning. Throughout Islamic history, Koranic commentaries have been written from both points of view, the outward and the inward. The first is called *tafsīr* and the second *ta’wīl*. Works of both categories are crucial for the understanding of the text of the Koran, each word and letter of which is like a living being with many levels of significance, including a numerical symbolism, which is studied in the science called *jafr*, corresponding to Jewish and Christian Kabbala. The chapters (*sūrah*s) and verses (*āyah*s) of the Koran are both the path and the guidepost in the Muslim’s earthly journey. The root of everything Islamic, from metaphysics and theology to law and ethics to the sciences and arts, is to be found in it. Every movement that has begun in Islamic history, whether religious, intellectual, social, or political, has sought legitimization in the Koran, and the permanent flow of the daily life of traditional Muslims unaffected by such movements has also been marked in the deepest sense by the presence of the Koran. Jurists have sought to interpret its legal verses and Sufis its inner meaning. Philosophers have drawn from its philosophical utterances and theologians have debated its assertions about the nature of God’s Attributes and His relation to the world. Today, as when it was revealed, the Koran remains the central reality of Islam and the heart of Muslim life in both its individual and social aspects.



THE PROPHET OF ISLAM:

The Prophet of Islam, to whom we shall henceforth refer simply as the Prophet, is for the West the most misunderstood reality within the Islamic universe. For over a millennium he has been maligned in various European sources as an apostate, a pretender, and even the Antichrist, and one has had to wait well over a thousand years until the twentieth century to see fair treatments of him appear in European languages. Until recently, Christians usually compared him, of course very unfavourably, to Christ, assuming that he holds the same position in Islam as Christ does in Christianity. Westerners therefore called Islam Mohammadanism until a few decades ago, a term detested by Muslims, and concentrated their attacks against him in order to vilify Islam. Even those who admitted to his

remarkable achievements in this world refused to accept him as a prophet. Christian attacks against him were, in fact, the most painful and divisive element in Islam's relationship with Christianity over the centuries. Even today the general misunderstanding of the Prophet in the West remains a major obstacle to mutual understanding. In modern times certain Western writers opposed to Christianity tried to use the Prophet as an instrument in their attacks on Christianity without any real appreciation or understanding of the Prophet himself. Rarely does one find in earlier Western history a figure such as the German poet Goethe, who harboured deep respect and even love for the Prophet. To understand the heart of Islam it is, therefore, essential to understand the significance of the Prophet from the point of view of traditional Muslims—not that of either Muslim modernists who neglect his spiritual dimension or the so-called puritan reformers who for other reasons belittle his significance in the total religious economy of Islam. The Koran asserts clearly that the Prophet was a man and not divine, but also adds that God chose him as His final messenger, the "Seal of Prophets," that he was given the most exalted and noble character, and that he was chosen as a model for Muslims to emulate as mentioned in the verse, "Verily you have in the Messenger of God an excellent exemplar for him who looks to God and the Last Day and remembers God often" (32:21). This verse is the basis for the emulation of the Sunnah, or wonts (in the sense of actions and deeds) of the Prophet, that is central to the whole of Islam. For Muslims, the Prophet is a mortal man (*bashar*), but also God's most perfect creature, or what the Sufis, the mystics of Islam, call the Universal Man (*al-insān al-kāmil*). As a Sufi poem recited often throughout the Islamic world asserts, Muhammad is a man, but not like other men. Rather, he is a ruby and other men are like stones. The Prophet was born in Mecca in the "Year of the Elephant," that is, 570 C.E., into an aristocratic branch of a major tribe of Mecca known as the Quraysh. His own family descended from Hāshim, and so he and his descendants are known as Hāshimites, which was a branch of the Quraysh. His father, 'Abd Allāh, died before he was born and his mother, āminah, also died when Muhammad, whose most famous name means "the most praised one," was very young, leaving him an orphan. He was brought up in the household of his uncle Abū tālib, the father of 'Alī, the fourth Sunni caliph and the first Imām of Shī'ism. The young Muhammad also spent some time with the Bedouins in the desert to master Arabic eloquence and to learn their ways, which had been the custom of the people of Mecca from ancient times. From his early days he was known for his honesty and sincerity and given the title of *al-Amīn*, "the Trusted One." He also had a strong contemplative tendency, which caused him to retreat often into the desert for prayer. Although the Meccans at that time practiced a crass form of idolatry, there were among them those who still followed the primordial monotheism of Abraham and are referred to in the Koran as the *hunafa'*, the primordialists. The Prophet was one such person and believed in the one God even before being chosen as prophet. As a young man, Muhammad began to travel with caravans to Syria, and Muslims believe that it was during one of these trips that a Christian monk, Bahīrah, predicted that he would become a prophet. Because of his honesty and earnestness, which had become famous, he attracted the attention of a wealthy businesswoman of Mecca, Khadījah, who was fifteen years his senior, but who proposed marriage and asked him to manage her business affairs. Muhammad accepted and had a very happy marriage, from which issued four daughters, the most famous of whom is Fatimah. She later married 'Alī and is the mother of all the descendants of the Prophet, who are called *sayyids* or *sharīfs* and who have played an extraordinary role in Islamic history. The Prophet had a monogamous marriage until Khadījah died when he was fifty years old. It was only in the last years of his life that he contracted other marriages, mostly for the political purpose of unifying the various tribes of Arabia. When Muhammad was forty years old and praying in a cave called *al-hirā'* near Mecca, the archangel Gabriel came to him with the first verses of the revelation that constitutes the beginning of Surah 96, "The Clot." Thus began his prophetic mission, which was to be carried out in the most difficult situation conceivable, for the message was one of uncompromising monotheism in a city that was the centre of Arabian idolatry. The Ka'ba, or the House of God, which stands at the centre of Mecca and is the most holy site in Islam, was built originally, according to Muslim belief, by Adam himself and rebuilt by Abraham. But this primordial sanctuary had now become filled with the idols of various tribes who would regularly visit Mecca for the purpose of pilgrimage. Mecca had therefore also become a major centre for trade, and much of the power and wealth of Meccans derived from the presence of the Ka'ba in their city. The message of the Prophet struck therefore at the heart of not only the religion, but also the source of power and wealth of the people of his own city, including his family. At first only Khadījah, 'Alī, and the Prophet's old friend Abū Bakr accepted the message that was revealed to him. Gradually, however, a number of others, including such eminent personalities as 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, who was later to become the second caliph after Abū Bakr, and 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān, the future third caliph, embraced Islam. The very success of the Prophet's mission made the opposition to him and his followers more severe every day. There were several attempts on his life until, in the year 622 C.E., after agreements made with emissaries sent from the city of Yathrib to the north to Mecca, he migrated by Divine command to that city along with his followers. That migration, called *al-hijrah* in Arabic, marks the major turning point in Islamic history, when Islam was transformed from a small group of devotees to a full-fledged community. Yathrib became known as *Madīnat al-nabī*, the City of the Prophet, and is

known to this day as Medina. Here the first Islamic society, which has remained the ideal model for all later Islamic societies, was founded. Shortly before the migration, an event of supreme spiritual and religious significance took place in the Prophet's life, an event that is also mentioned in the Koran. According to Islamic tradition, he was taken on what is called the Nocturnal Journey, or al-mi'rāj, on a supernatural horse, called al-Burāq, by Gabriel from Mecca to Jerusalem. Then, from the place where the mosque of the Dome of the Rock is now located, he was taken through all of the heavens, that is, all the higher states of being, to the Divine Presence Itself, meeting on the journey earlier prophets such as Moses and Jesus. The mi'rāj is the prototype of all spiritual wayfaring and realization in Islam, and its architecture even served as a model for Dante's Divine Comedy. The experiences of this celestial journey, moreover, constitute the inner reality of the Islamic daily prayers and also the bringing to completion the performance of their outward form. It was during this journey that the Prophet reached the Divine Presence, beyond even the paradisal states at the station that marks the boundary of universal existence; beyond this station, which the Koran calls the Lote Tree of the Uttermost End, there is only the hidden mystery of God known to Himself alone. It was in this most exalted state that the Prophet received the revelation that contains what many consider to be the heart of the credo of Islam: "The Messenger believeth, and the faithful believe, in what has been revealed unto him from his Lord. Each one believeth in God and His angels and His books and His messengers: we make no distinction between any of His messengers. And they say: we hear and we obey: grant us, Thou our Lord, Thy forgiveness; unto Thee is the ultimate becoming" (2:285)

Was Islam preached with the Sword?

THE PEACEFUL SPREAD OF ISLAM: Given the fragility of every religion at birth and in its early years, it may be that there are really only two questions to be asked. Did Islam survive? Did it spread across the world? The answer to both questions is in the affirmative. After that the history books may be closed.

The message embodied in the Koran — and the laws derived from it and from the Sunnah of the Prophet — bind the community together; no exterior pressure is required to make this binding effective. True sovereignty resides neither in the ruler nor in government nor in a statistical majority; it belongs to God, but is in a certain sense delegated to His 'rightly-guided' community; and the Law, precisely because it is a 'reminder' of the laws inherent in our own created nature, should not in principle require the apparatus of the state, officials and policemen, to make it effective. Whatever place the contemporary Westerner may give to religion in his personal and social life, this is still only 'a place'; it is seen as one element in the total structure of human life, but it is not itself that totality. For Islam, on the other hand, the social order is a part of the religion and cannot be separated from it.

The rapidity with which Islam spread across the known world of the seventh to eighth centuries was strange enough, but stranger still is the fact that no rivers flowed with blood, no fields were enriched with the corpses of the vanquished. As warriors the Arabs might have been no better than others of their kind who had ravaged and slaughtered across the peopled lands but, unlike these others, they were on a leash. There were no massacres, no rapes, no cities burned. These men feared God to a degree scarcely imaginable in our time and were in awe of His all-seeing presence, aware of it in the wind and the trees, behind every rock and in every valley. Even in these strange lands there was no place in which they could hide from this presence, and while vast distances beckoned them ever onwards, they trod softly on the earth, as they had been commanded to do. There had never been a conquest like this.

In the centuries which followed the abortive expedition into France the threat to Western Europe was never far removed. Islam was the dominant civilization and Christendom was confined to an appendix to the Euro-Asian land mass, closed in upon itself and never really safe except in those periods when the Muslims were divided among themselves. The Crusaders came to Palestine and were, in due course, driven out, and in the thirteenth century the Arab world was devastated by the Mongol hordes; but the Mongols were converted, to become champions of Islam, as were the Turks. Constantinople fell in 1453, and soon the Ottomans took up the challenge represented by the European enclave. Belgrade was captured in 1521 and Rhodes in the following year. Sulayman the Magnificent entered Hungary and won a great victory at Mohacs, and in the 1530s the French King, Francis I, sought his support against the Hapsburgs and encouraged Ottoman plans for the invasion of Italy. A few years later it was the Protestant princes who negotiated for Muslim help against the Pope and the Emperor, and the Sultan made his preparations to enter Germany.

The pietists were for ever calling down curses upon the heads of the Caliphs, and their successors today can find no spark of pity in their hearts for men of power who are less pure than they are; but it is never as simple as that. The saying of Jesus that 'Offences must needs come, but woe to him through whom the offence cometh' is amongst the most daunting statements in the Gospels, for sometimes it is only through 'offences' that religion is preserved. Had it not been for formidable rulers who, from impure motives and with dirty hands, exercised their trade in the only effective way it could be exercised, there might have been no space left in this world for the pious, nor any school in which they could learn piety. Such contradictions are by no means confined to Islam; they are universal and arise wherever the spiritual and the worldly confront each other. Precisely because this earth is not Paradise and cannot be Paradise, it is condemned — at least from a certain point of view — to being a 'Theatre of the Absurd'.

Sexuality in Islam:

The human body is a sacred temple wherewith mankind gives obeisance to the Creator and it is for this reason, people are held dear to the Almighty. Muslims feel that every human being is a holy figure worthy of respect, because the God of the Muslims loves and cherishes them.

Since God had chosen man over all other creation, He selected this species to be the most noble and glorified, and it is for this reason, Muslims are encouraged to live life in an ascetic manner and refrain from overindulgence of any sort, especially sexual promiscuity.

While marriage has been permitted in Islam, Muslims are told to wed one another only for reasons of procreation, and to use the body of another human being, be it a man or a woman, for any purpose other than to produce children is sternly prohibited by Islamic jurisprudence, as Muslims feel that satisfying carnal lust and objectifying another human being causes unrest, discord and dislike between couples, for the only true love that is lasting is one where sexual activities cannot or do not take place.

Many couples might argue that they love each other and have strong feelings towards their spouses, but in reality, the supposed love between two persons engaging in sexual encounters cannot be considered love, and it is only sheer and crude lust, which may be present at this moment and disappear the next, or brew powerfully for one person today, and pine for another person's body tomorrow. It is the nature of the human mind to love only that which one respects and so when one person objectifies the body of another man or woman, he cannot possibly love her purely and unconditionally as before. What we understand as love and sex are not necessarily noble emotions, because in reality, those are merely lust and carnal desires, which feels exuberant at times and terribly depressing at others.

Sexual activities between married couples are permitted in Islam, but the religion call for moderation in every sexual and emotional encounter, and even for the sake of producing children, Muslims are advised to remain mostly abstinent. These passages have been written not to excite compassion, or to soften the consciousness of concepts in the reader's mind, and neither is our purpose to aggravate discontent towards any particular race, religion or idea, but as a human being, it is sensible to see that lusting after another human's flesh and worshipping his or her filthy body parts can do nothing except to reduce us to the lowest state of penury and distress. It is nearly impossible to love someone after objectifying and humiliating that person, so by excessively using the body of a wife, a husband might begin to feel disinclined to respect and honour her soul. Indeed, in this age of technological advancement, humanity is delving into more novel and imprudent ways to insert graphic excitement into the everyday sexual experiences, but in the midst of all the sexual fanfare, Muslims are boldly reminded that their very own guide and patriarch Muhammad had exercised such modestly and lived such a bashful life that by his own wife's admission, believers are informed that never had Muhammad ever seen a naked woman nor had any woman ever seen his body, let alone touch it. This shy Arab shepherd who led Arabia from the perennial ends of darkness to the light of civilisation, never looked at woman's body, whereas an average adolescent in our age views millions of images of naked women by the age of fifteen, causing the mind to become polluted with disrespect and objectification, to the point that they cannot grow up or respect women. Another criticism of Islam, which has been no less devoutly entertained, is the alleged marriages of the Muslim prophet Muhammad, who allegedly married multiple women, but from the admission of his own betrothed women, we are able to establish that the marriages Muhammad conducted was purely official in nature, and he neither consummated those weddings nor was he intimate with any man or woman in his lifetime, and this led to many Arabs publicly declaring that Muhammad was more modest and shy than the virgin girls inside their veils. Other Arabs openly announced that Muhammad was a virgin who was more shy than a young girl who was hidden inside a tent and had her face covered with a veil. However, shyness in seventh century Arabia was not a unique phenomenon, as Muhammad's dear friend Osman was also known to be very shy, to the point that he was horrified to expose his body to his wife, and though he loved her greatly, refused to be physically intimate with his own wife.

Muhammad's shyness was even greater, and it served as a shining example to his future followers who were encouraged to retain their modesty. Since his youthhood, he was a fair young man with resplendent beauty and blooming personality, and his entire life, he lived in virgin purity and exquisite sensibility, and never indulged in lustful acts or behaviours, and it was primarily for his excessive chastity that many of pagans and disbelievers found intense jealousy arousing in their hearts and in those fits of envy, they transmitted many false narrations and attempted to make the unsuspecting world believe that Muhammad was somehow a womaniser with many wives and slaves.

Just as every poor man is not the victim of avarice, every married couple is not guilty of objectifying the human body of lusting after the mortal flesh, but when God Himself honoured mankind so tremendously, how can it be that we can demean the body to the level of animals and let the sacred temple be defiled by the filth of other men or women, or let ourselves be used as a toilet bowl, especially since indulging in excessive sexual activities is bound to make one the slave of aristocratical insolence and contempt.

Remaining obsessed with sexual gratifications can cause the heart to wallow in a general mass of human misery and serves to hinder intellectual growth and diminish the force of righteous zeal. Why should one human being choose to dishonour himself in the presence of another man or woman who does not even love the person, and rather than honouring oneself for the sake of the Lord who created and purified humankind above all creation.

The person whose body parts you are worshipping today will probably move on to another person tomorrow, and inwardly, while you are adoring each body part of the person, that spouse is likely disgusted of you, or is sneering in his or her mind, thinking about the lowliness of your attitude. Why then should anyone demean themselves to another human when God assures us his love and compassion and entreats us never to humiliate ourselves?

Homosexuality and Islam:

Islam is a tolerant religion which Muslims believe is a way of life. The Muslim God known as Allah is a merciful being Who will accept everyone and anyone into the folds of his religion. In Islam people of all colours ethnicity religion race or considered to be equal and holy. God considers all humans and animals to be His personal creation and therefore an extension of His holiness. No matter how many sins or how many evil acts a person does in Islam, the Muslim God welcomes him into the folds of the human kind and the human race. Sinful acts, regardless of how severe those are or how trivial they are, all that can be used to hurt others or hurt themselves are disallowed in Islam. Muslims are forbidden from eating anything that could harm them or could endanger their own health by the health of those around them. In addition, Muslims are instructed to live a clean and pure life. As part of this purity, the Muslim God let His creation to live in peace and harmony amongst themselves and therefore one of the most interesting and severe regulations in Islam is the act of back biting or speaking ill about someone else in his or her absence. The reason speaking ill of others is considered to be the most heinous crime in Islam is because this creates discord amongst the people and it could cause one person to hate another.

Like larceny, dishonesty lying treating swindling and adultery, homosexuality is also forbidden in Islam. However, the act itself is not allowed but the feelings of the heart is irrelevant. I once spoke to a cleric of a very prominent Grand mosque and the elderly clergy told me that some of the homosexual men and women may end up going to heaven as saints because despite having sexual feelings towards members of the same sex, they desisted from acting in their fantasies. They refrained from indulging in adulterous activities and that is the reason why they are so special and holy in the eyes of God that in the Muslim heaven those men and women may well be on the top tier and live amongst the saints of the nation. Islam prohibits any form of cruelty especially towards people who have so much feelings in their heart such as people who are gay or homosexual or lesbians. Having feelings and emotional attachment towards member of the same sex is not a sin in Islam at all, but rather acting out in those fantasies is discouraged by the Muslim religion. It is primarily due to the reason that the Muslim God does not want his creation to humiliate themselves. For instance, even in heterosexual marriages between a man and a woman, Islam does not allow a couple to engage in any sort of sexual activity or relationship that does not produce children. The act of intimacy is allowed in Islam only and solely for the purpose of procreation and nothing else. To satisfy one sexual desire and carnality and to do so by using the body of another honourable human being is completely forbidden in Islam. Whether the other person is a man or a woman is irrelevant, because Islam orders men and women to honor themselves and to honor others who have been created by the Almighty. Worshiping the body of another human being is idolatry in itself, and this form of human worshiping and enslaving oneself to another person causes the wisdom and emotion to erode from the mind, and eventually, this leads to many intelligent people to lose their sanity to the point that they decided to leave the folds of Islam and begin to belittle and curse the Merciful God. It is for this reason that homosexual relationships are not allowed in Islam since it is likely purely lust-based, as the cohabitation of two men cannot result in children. However, the Muslim prophet never permitted anyone to stone, hurt or kill those people who were actively involved in homosexual activities. Islam advocated for forgiveness and compassion towards anyone who failed to control their sexual desires and activities. For many years, there has been thousands of false narrations and false narratives about the Islamic

religion and many people falsely claimed that Islam somehow advocates for the murder or torture of homosexual people. However, nothing could be farther from the truth. The act of sexuality or being homosexual and having sexual feelings towards people of the same gender is not a sin in Islam at all but rather it could be a source of great reward if someone has those feelings and refrain from acting on those impulses.

I wish people who have succumbed to the desires of the weak flesh knew that God is everywhere, and God is Merciful. God does not hate you. It is often humans who hate you but you know not, so you hate God when He tries to save you.

Verily, God created us for love, because He wanted us to love Him, because He loves us the most! No human can love you more than God. No mother, no father, no sister, no aunt, no friend can ever love you more than God.

Nay! Rather it is God who put love in their hearts for you. But love is a test for those who want to commit adultery, fornication, homosexuality, incest or child molesting.

God is testing you. You may believe that the person whom you want to commit this sin of love with, loves you but God knows they don't.

God knows that which you and I shall never know. The lovers or family or spouse can never love you more than God, but God sometimes test you by denying you the right to cohabit with that person or worship that person physically sexually and emotionally and mentally.

Yes, sometimes God tests those in Africa with hunger, with poverty, with pain or with the sickness of their children, when mothers see their children die in front of them because they cannot afford medicine for their dying sick child while the mother cannot buy medicine for her child. God sees if the mother curses God or hates Him and leaves God forever because of the pain she suffered.

But whatever God does, he does for a reason. Maybe, the child died in his infancy because he would have grown up to hurt his mother, or maybe the child would grow up to be a sinner, and maybe God saved the child and through that, perhaps maybe the mother will never sin or turn to the devil and she will attain eternal salvation and when she dies just a few years later, God will reunite her for eternity with her child in a heaven that has no end to its happiness and no hate and no pain.

Then why did the mother get tested? Because God tests those whom He loves and when He wants to elevate a person to positions of highest reward or whenever he wants someone to deserve the highest level in paradise but the person does not deserve that level because their level of piety is very low, then God puts them through the most difficult tests and pain in order to purify them for a highest level in paradise for eternal salvation.

And remember, whatever befalls you and your family, it is you who brought it upon yourselves because of your own heart's actions and feelings, as God never does injustice; rather, He is the most Merciful and most rewarding and very soon you shall see how much unimaginable reward he has saved for you in an eternal heaven. this life will end so fast so fast so quick. time flies so fast and all love fails except the love of your God.

Is it not God who made the heavens and the earth for you. Is it not God who out love in your heart so you may find some happiness in this world. Is it not god who gives permission for your heart to beat every time it stops? is it not god who gave you a organs that digest your meal! Is it not god who gives you oxygen for free? Is it not god who placed the trees at your service to purify your air? Is it not God who gave you your soul every morning and allows you to wake from your sleep to give you one more chance to repent and turn to him and become chaste and pure! is it not god who put love in the heart of your lovers for you so you may find ease? Yet shall you hate Him for and disobey Him for the laws He created to honor you? God alone knows what is best for us, for He created us. If someone fancies his mother in a sexual way, he should still refrain from cohabiting with her, because God told

mankind not to. Therefore, religious values are important for us to remain humans. If we give up faith in God, immorality may pervade every walk of life, and there will be no one to defend the wronged ones. Without a strict guidance of moralistic faith and without the spiritual support of religious scholars, men and women will be unable to maintain morality for too long, as history had proven that with the absence of religion came depravities which demented men eagerly approved into equally demented laws. One may argue that unjust laws of the past, like the pagan Roman incestuous edicts, or the race-related Nuremberg laws of Germany and the Segregation laws of the United States have been abolished and since, and now, all are granted equal rights in the eyes of the government. However, this argument is jittery and lame at best, because laws that are amended and enacted by men are bound to regress or change. It is therefore, not impossible for such demeaning laws to return to our society. One such example can be found in the “pedo-sexual movement,” of communist Europe, which advocated the legalisation of consensual sex between adults and children, and unsurprisingly, found a warm reception in the 1980s. However, it should be noted that the move to legalise paedophilia in the 1980s went beyond Germany and Europe. The North American Man-Boy Love Association in the United States, also advocated for legalising paedophilia. Many advocated of incest argue and even bring scientific proof that children as young as five are able to enjoy sexual encounters with adults, but we know these are results of sick minds, because God told us to honour and love our children in a pure manner. Similar movement was rampant in countries like the Netherlands, Canada and even the UK, and these left-wing pro-paedophilia circles often facilitated real-life child abuse but was fortunately stopped by the opposition parties. It is possible that with the incessant negative and false reports which many Christian scholars and writers are constantly spewing about Muslims, disappearance of Islam could take place and the eventual eradication of Judaism and Christianity would follow, and such deviant movement would return again in our cultures as a result of irreligion and lack of moral standards and ethical knowledge.

Many agnostics or critics of Christianity argue that paedophilia and incest are natural, albeit, forbidden love, which should be legalised, and banning such practices are paramount to infringing civil liberties. However, many opponents insist that such sexual practices are unnatural, and mothers and daughters should have a sacred loving bond with one another, and should not engage in lesbian relationship with each other, and neither should sexual intercourse be allowed between a father and his son or a grandfather and his consenting teenage grandson, however desperately the parties wish to engage in such activities.

In this day, molestation cases against pious priests are very common, and therefore, the hatred of some people towards them is understandable, but even many years before the first child abuse cases surfaced, people persecuted the clergy endlessly. For example, during the French revolution, despite having no molestation charges against them, Christian priests and Church fathers were killed anyway by those bigoted people. And now they have started this hate campaign again.

History showed how perverse and vulgar the world would be without the existence of Christian Europe, and yet these two are being placed under severe attacks. Churches in Europe are being shut down, and priests in North America and Europe are being falsely accused of being molesters, when the vast majority of sexual offenders are irreligious. It was during the times of godless Europe when debauchery was prevalent, because without Christianity, Europe at that time had become enslaved to the Roman emperors, who had no limit to their depravities, and publicly legalized incest and adultery. For example, the emperor Nero, who famously framed Christians for burning Rome after setting his own city on fire, had a fully incestuous relationship with his mother Agrippina. After having sexual relation with her for many years, Nero became weary of this relationship and ultimately killed his mother in the year 59.

SEVEN ARTICLES OF FAITH IN ISLAM

In order for one to be a Mu'min or a believer a Muslim must believe in the 7 articles of faith. This is called Imaan. Without Imaan good deeds are not accepted. Most valuable treasure is Imaan and the greatest misfortune is Kufr. In this regards, Allah says: "Those who have Imaan and practice righteousness, they will be in the Gardens of Paradise" [Ayat 22, Surah Shuraa].

The first fundamental principle you must believe in are Tauheed or Doctrine of Allah's unity. In these times of liberalism, ignorance, and materialism many Muslims have fallen into traps of deception by Kufr theories and modernists Muslims who have confused the masses with their fanciful interpretation of Imaan.

A Muslim must believe in the oneness of "Allah". He is supreme and eternal. Creator and provider of everything. He must be worshipped alone. His names and attributes are all perfect and unique to him. He does not beget nor was he begotten (Surah Ikhlas, Ayat 3). He does as He pleases.

A Muslim must believe in all the messengers of Allah with no discrimination between them. However believing in them does not mean practicing their respective Shariah. Every nation had messengers sent by Allah to convey his message. Some of the messengers are Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Jesus, and finally Muhammad (God's peace and Mercy be upon him). A believer must believe that Prophet (God's peace and Mercy be upon him) was sent with a universal message for all mankind. He was the seal and last of all messengers. He was appointed as Rasul and Nabi by Allah Ta'ala, wahi came to him, after him no other messengers will come, he is the noblest and highest of rank in the entire creation of Allah Ta'ala. His mission cancels all previous missions and shariats; it is obligatory to act in accordance with the Shariah of Muhammad (God's peace and Mercy be upon him). And rejecting a single teaching which had been established to be that of Rasullullah (God's peace and Mercy be upon him) negates belief in Muhammad (God's peace and Mercy be upon him) and such negation results in the negation of Imaan.

"By Your Rabb! (i.e. Allah takes an oath). They can never believe (adopt Imaan) unless they appoint you (Muhammad) as the arbitrator in all their disputes. Then (i.e. after accepting you as the arbitrator) they find no rejection (or dislike) in their hearts regarding that which you have decided; and they submit whole-heartedly (to your verdict)."

Third article Muslim believes are all the scriptures of Allah, but in their original forms. These revealed books such as the Torah of Moses, Zabur of David, and Injeel of Jesus has all either been lost or corrupted. Because of this Allah has revealed the Holy Qur'an to Prophet Muhammad (God's peace and Mercy be upon him) as the final revelation and guidance for all mankind till the Day of Judgment. This Qur'an is the speech of Allah Ta'ala and whoever rejects this rejects Islam.

Belief in the existence of Malaikah is also an article of Imaan. They are part of the unseen world. Allah has created them out of Noor, they are sinless, has no gender, their number is innumerable; they require no food or drink. Disobedience never occurs to them. They are busy in executing all their duties Allah Ta'ala has imposed on them.

Fifth article of Imaan is the belief in the Day of Judgment. Life is only a test for the man to see whether or not he will follow the commands of Allah. People will be physically resurrected in the hereafter to stand before Allah for a reckoning of their worldly deeds and actions. Before Qiyaamah commences all sun, moon, stars, planets will come into non-existence. It will all be destroyed when Allah commands Israfeel (alayhis salaam) to blow the soor. In Qiyaamah Mizaan or scale will be setup to weigh people's deeds, and all will have to try to cross the bridge of Siraat over Jahannum.

Muslims must also believe in physical and material places of Jannat and Jahannum. Jannat is a world of luxury, comfort, and pleasure. Jahannum is a abode of hardship, misery and punishment. They have already been created. Allah states in the Qur'an Shareef: "...paradise which has been prepared for the pious" and about Jahannum "... it has been prepared for the unbelievers".

And finally a Muslim must believe all actions of creation are created by Allah, such as Kufr and Imaan, worship or sin, obedience or disobedience. Allah is the sole creator. However Allah does not compel man to act. He has given man Aql and has guided him with Prophets so man can distinguish between truth and falsehood, virtue and vice. Allah has also granted man will to enable him to choose and act voluntarily in matters of truth and falsehood, obedience and disobedience.

Everything that happens in this world is ordained and predestined by Allah. The good and bad all comes with knowledge and permission of Allah. Allah is the most wise. So whatever he does has a meaningful purpose although at times we fail to understand it fully.

IS ALLAH THE PAGAN MOON GOD? RESPONSE TO WIKIISLAM ABOUT HUBAL

Hubal was one of the gods of the polytheistic pre-Islamic era Arabs. Hubal was the moon god. [1]

This paganism was extremely prominent in Makkah in particular.

Since Allah simply means God in Arabic, pagan gods were commonly referred to as 'allah', but none was given the actual name Allah, except for that of the One God (swt). People referred to their gods as 'god', just as people do today. They don't say "the God of Islam" or "the God of Christianity". They simply call the god they believe in "God". What other word would they have used in the past?

The anti-Islamists on the Wikislam article try to take this simple linguistic similarity, which is the same across religions even today, and turn it into the idea that 'Islam worships a moon god'.

"there continue to be theories that Islam's Allah is indeed Hubal" [Wikislam]

These claims solely come from people trying to discredit Islam because anyone who has actually studied Islam would see that it is the exact opposite of polytheism for many reasons.

1. Islam worships one god, the Creator of everything, and nothing more. This is the most solid and important tenet of Islam, and it is called 'tawheed'. Muslims without tawheed are not Muslims. [2][3]

2. Muhammad (saw) destroyed all of the pagan idols that were inside of the Ka'bah and the pictures that were in there as well. [4]

3. Muhammad (God's peace and Mercy be upon him) differentiates between Hubal and Allah in hadith directly – showing that the worship of Hubal and the worship of Allah were in fact at odds – not nearly the same.

"Abu Sufyan said, "Superior may be Hubal!" On that the Prophet (God's peace and Mercy be upon him) said (to his companions), "Reply to him." They asked, "What may we say?" He said, "Say: Allah is More Elevated and More Majestic!" [Sahih Bukhari Vol. 5, Book 59, Hadith 375, #4043, 4044]

4. Ibrahim (Abraham) makes a direct difference in the Qur'an between the moon, the sun, and Allah. This is not to mention that the Quran, also in the quote we are about to show, distinguishes Allah as the Creator of the heavens, the Earth, the sun, and the moon. The moon could not create itself, and, just as well, the Qur'an makes a clear distinction between the two.

"It is He Who has created the heavens and the earth in truth, and on the Day (i.e. the Day of Resurrection) He will say: "Be!", – and it shall become. His Word is the truth. His will be the dominion on the Day when the trumpet will be blown. All-Knower of the unseen and the seen. He is the All-Wise, Well-Aware (of all things). And (remember) when Ibrahim (Abraham) said to his father Azar: "Do you take idols as alihah (gods)? Verily, I see you and your people in manifest error. Thus did we show Ibrahim (Abraham) the kingdom of the heavens and the earth that he be one of those who have Faith with certainty. When the night covered him over with darkness he saw a star. He

said: "This is my lord." But when it set, he said: "I like not those that set." When he saw the moon rising up, he said: "This is my lord." But when it set, he said: "Unless my Lord guides me, I shall surely be among the erring people." When he saw the sun rising up, he said: "This is my lord. This is greater." But when it set, he said: "O my people! I am indeed free from all that you join as partners in worship with Allah. Verily, I have turned my face towards Him Who has created the heavens and the earth Hanifa (Islamic Monotheism, i.e. worshipping none but Allah Alone) and I am not of Al-Mushrikun (see V.2:105)." [Translation of the Holy Qur'an 6:72-80]

Lastly, I leave you all with a quote from Abu Sufyan, the archenemy of Islam, after he finally embraced the truth of Islam.

"He tells us to worship Allah and Allah alone and not to worship anything along with Him, and to renounce all that our ancestors had said. He orders us to pray, to speak the truth, to be chaste and to keep good relations with our Kith and kin." [Sahih Bukhari Vol. 1, Book. 1, Num. 6]

This article contains answers to:

<http://wikiislam.net/wiki/Hubal>

[1] Karen Armstrong (2002). Islam: A Short History. p. 11. ISBN 0-8129-6618-X.

[2] Tawhid in Oxford Islamic Studies Online. Oxfordislamicstudies.com. 2008-05-06.

[3] Vincent J. Cornell, Encyclopedia of Religion, Vol 5, pp.3561-3562

[4] Guillaume, Alfred (1955). The Life of Muhammad. A translation of Ibn Ishaq's "Sirat Rasul Allah". Oxford University Press. p. 552. ISBN 978-0-19-636033-1.

WOMEN IN ISLAM

At a time when the rest of the world, from Greece and Rome to India and China, considered women as no better than children or even slaves, with no rights whatsoever, Islam acknowledged women's equality with men in a great many respects. The Quran states:

"And among His signs is this: that He created mates for you from yourselves that you may find rest and peace of mind in them, and He ordained between you love and mercy. Certainly, herein indeed are signs for people who reflect."

[Noble Quran 30:21]

Prophet Muhammad (Sallallaahu Alaihi Wasallam) said:

"The most perfect in faith amongst believers is he who is best in manners and kindest to his wife." [Abu Dawud]

Muslims believe that Adam and Hawwa were created from the same soul. Both were equally guilty of their sin and fall from grace, and Allah forgave both.

Many women in Islam have had high status; consider the fact that the first person to convert to Islam was Khadijah, the beloved wife of Prophet Muhammad, whom he both loved and respected. Many of the female Companions

accomplished great deeds and achieved fame, and throughout Islamic history there have been famous and influential scholars and jurists.

We might also mention that while many in the West criticize Islam with regard to the treatment of women, in fact a number of Muslim countries have had women rulers and presidents. To name a few: Turkey; Bangladesh and Pakistan. In fact, the first ever martyr in the way of Islam was a woman.

With regard to education, both women and men have the same rights and obligations. This is clear in Prophet Muhammad's saying:

"Seeking knowledge is mandatory for every believer." [Ibn Majah]

This implies men and women.

A woman is to be treated as God has endowed her, with rights, such as to be treated as an individual, with the right to own and dispose of her own property and earnings, enter into contracts, even after marriage. She has the right to be educated and to work outside the home if she so chooses. She has the right to inherit from her father, mother, and husband.

A very interesting point to note is that in Islam, unlike any other religion, a woman can be an imam, a leader of communal prayer, for a group of women.

A Muslim woman also has obligations. All the laws and regulations pertaining to prayer, fasting, charity, pilgrimage, doing good deeds, etc., apply to women, albeit with minor differences having mainly to do with female physiology.

Before marriage, a woman has the right to choose her husband. Islamic law is very strict regarding the necessity of having the woman's consent for marriage.

The groom gives a marriage dowry to the bride for her own personal use. She keeps her own family name, rather than taking her husband's. As a wife, a woman has the right to be supported by her husband even if she is already rich. She also has the right to seek divorce and custody of young children. She does not return the dowry, except in a few unusual situations.

Despite the fact that in many places and times Muslim communities have not always adhered to all or even many of the foregoing in practice, the ideal has been there for 1,400 years, while virtually all other major civilizations did not begin to address these issues or change their negative attitudes until the 19th and 20th centuries, and there are still many contemporary civilizations which have yet to do so.

DOES ISLAM OPPRESS WOMEN?

Why no women prophets?

In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

All praise and thanks are due to Allah, and peace and blessings be upon His Messenger.

Prophets were raised and sent to the whole of mankind in different lands and at different times. The prophets were the channel of communication between Allah and mankind. It is through them that Allah, in His infinite mercy, provided men and women with guidance to follow the right course and so make this world a happy and peaceful place to live in. For those who accept and follow that guidance, the reward in the life after death is much greater and more desirable than the fleeting pleasures of this world.

The prophets and messengers were very special people, but nonetheless, they were no more than human beings. They were not sons, partners, or incarnations of Allah. The message of every prophet and messenger was one and the same: "There is none worthy and deserving of worship except Allah."

states: "Allah sent many prophets and messengers to different people and at different times. There are only a few whose names are mentioned in the Qur'an. Allah says, "We did send messengers before you: of them there are some whose story We have related to you, and some whose story We have not related to you." (Ghafir 78; An-Nisa' 164). The Messengers whose names are mentioned in the Qur'an were all men. There is no woman prophet or messenger whose name is mentioned in the Qur'an. Three times in the Qur'an Allah, Most High, says, "We did not send before you (i.e. Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him) any but men (rijal) whom we did inspire..." (Yusuf 109; An-Nahl 43; Al-Anbiya' 7). Apparently, this means that only men were chosen by Allah as His messengers and prophets. But the word "rijal" does not mean only men. In most cases in the Qur'an this word is used to mean men only, but there are a few places where it is also used to indicate both men and women. See for example Surat Al-A'raf 46: "And on the Heights (al-A'raf) will be men who would know everyone by their marks..." We know that the people of al-A'raf will be both men and women, so this means that the word "rijal" can be used for both. Similarly in Surat At-Tawbah 109, Almighty Allah says, "Surely the Masjid whose foundation was laid down from the first day on piety is more worthy of your standing forth there for prayer. In it are men who love to be purified. And Allah loves those who make themselves pure." This refers to the Masjid of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) where men and women both used to come for prayers. So it is obvious that the statement "in it are men who love to be purified," does not mean "men only". One can also refer to Surat An-Nur 37 and Al-Jinn 6. In these two verses the word "rijal" is used and it includes men and women both.

Thus, the majority of the Muslim scholars hold that the prophets and messengers were only men (i.e. males), but there were some scholars of the Qur'an who said that it was possible that some women were also prophets or messengers of Allah. We can say that most of the time Allah sent men as His prophets and messengers, but there is no conclusive evidence from the Qur'an to prove that only men were sent as prophets or to say that Allah never sent a woman as a prophet.

But women were the mothers of all the prophets!

Why were men often chosen to perform this task? Obviously, the reason is not that women are inferior to men, because Allah has created men and women equal in their spirituality. The main reason seems to me was that the prophets and messengers of Allah were not only to preach Allah's message, but they were also to establish His rule and authority. They had to struggle and challenge the forces of evil. It would be easier for men to perform this task than women."

RELIGIOUS WARS: CRUSADERS WERE NOT CHRISTIANS JUST LIKE TODAY'S TERRORIST AND ISIS ARE NOT MUSLIMS: For hundreds of years, pagans and devil-worshippers tried to malign the name of God and destroy heavenly religions by framing faithful believers as killers, as they had done during the crusades. Almost none of the men who participated in the deadly crusade were actual Christians, but they were men who pretended to be followers of Christ.

THE BLOODBATHS OF THE CRUSADES AGAINST THE MUSLIMS

I. Introduction: It is in these lawless and dangerous times when Prophet Muhammad is being viciously attacked as a "terrorist" in Western caricatures, and when Arabs and Muslims are being reviled throughout the West as "terrorists", "fanatics", "fascists", and "intolerant", that it becomes necessary (lest we forget) to recall the past Western Christian terrorism of the Crusades against the Arabs. This well-documented record of the cannibalistic and barbaric Crusaders, which is well known in the Arab world, is rather obscure to most Westerners because it is either conveniently concealed or deeply buried in some unnoticed specialized books.

When US President George W. Bush said in 2001 – in response to the terrorist attacks of 9-11 – that the US was waging a "Crusade" on Arab and Muslim "terrorism", he was actually conjuring up the old nightmarish horrors of the Western terrorist Crusades against the Arabs. However, because of widespread angry reactions across the Arab

and Muslim worlds to Bush's use of the word "Crusade", the American Government was forced to replace it with the word "war". Regardless, the current American illegal and brutal wars on Afghanistan and Iraq and instigating chaos in other places of Middle East are indeed very similar to the past Western terrorist Crusades. Apparently when it comes to Western dealings with Arabs and Muslims the old saying still stands: the more things change, the more they remain the same.

II. The Crusades: A General Overview

Of all the religious wars in human history waged by any religion, at any place, and at any time, none have been bloodier, more genocidal, more barbaric, and more protracted than the 200-year "holy wars" by the Western Crusades against the Arabs and Islam. The Western Crusaders horrifically soaked Asia Minor and the Eastern Arab Mediterranean coast with Arab blood (both Muslim and Jewish). The objective of the Crusades was simple, to destroy the Arabs (whether Muslim or Jew) in the Holy Land of Palestine and its environs "...on the ground that they had no right to inhabit their part of the earth, while for a Christian the whole world is his country."

Unlike Muslims (Arab and non-Arab) who have always tolerated Christians and Jews (Arab and non-Arab), lived and worked with them side by side in peace as "People of the Book" in all Arab and Muslim lands as well as in old Arab Andalusia (Spain and Portugal), the Christian West has had no desire to coexist with Islam and the Arabs. Also, unlike Muslims who revere Nabi Musa (Moses) and Nabi 'Eesa (Jesus) as God's prophets, most Christians and Jews in the "tolerant" West have no respect for Prophet Mohammad (sallallaahu alayhi wasalam) and are rudely contemptuous of him and Islam. In fact ever since its birth and its subsequent widespread expansion, Islam has been looked upon in the West as a mortal danger, both moral and military, to be strongly opposed or even destroyed. In his classic exposé of Christian violence worldwide, *A History of Christianity*, the Western Christian scholar Paul Johnson rejects the Western propaganda about Islam's "violent" expansion by stating that: "The success of Islam sprang essentially from the failure of Christian theologians to solve the problem of the Trinity and Christ's nature."

Nevertheless, the Western Crusades' insane bloodbaths against the Arabs were triggered by the decisive defeat of the Byzantine army in 1071 at the hands of the Turkish Seljuk (Abbasid) army. Fearing that all of Asia Minor would be quickly overrun by the Abbasids, the defeated Byzantine emperor, Alexius I, quickly appealed to his Christian rivals and opponents in Western Europe, i.e., Pope Urban II and his other "fellow" Christian rulers, to come to the aid of Constantinople by undertaking a "pilgrimage" or Crusade to "free" Jerusalem and the rest of Palestine from Arab and Muslim rule.

Emperor Alexius' appeal provided Pope Urban II with his lifetime opportunity to gain more recognition and power for the papal authority and for its role in legitimizing the temporal actions of the West European kings. Presiding over an urgent Church Council meeting, at Piacenza, Italy, in March 1095, Pope Urban II – with the Byzantine ambassador sitting next to him – called upon all the Western European followers of Christ to do "God's will" by carrying arms to "liberate the Holy Land" and cleanse it from the desecration of the Arab and Muslim "infidels." The Pope's call to fight the Arabs was ironic because, as scholar Francis Peters observed "God may indeed have wished it, but there is certainly no evidence that the Christians of Jerusalem did, or that anything extraordinary was occurring to pilgrims there to prompt such a response at that moment in history." Although Christian and Jewish pilgrims (Arab and non-Arab) were burdened by taxes; they were never barred or even restricted from their religious shrines in Jerusalem either by Muslim Arab or Turkish authorities, even during the few severe sporadic civil disturbances in Palestine. In fact, Arabs (Muslims, Jews, and Christians) as well as non-Arabs (also Muslims, Jews, and Christians) have all lived together in Palestine in peace under Islamic rule since the dawn of Islam.

In reality, however, the veritable rationale behind launching the Crusades went beyond religious impulses, which were mostly the concern of the common people. Western kings, knights, feudal lords, and merchants were driven primarily by political, military, and commercial ambitions as well as by the prospects of new lands and riches that would accompany the establishment of European colonies in the Arab world.

Nevertheless, to start a new general European massive movement, like the Crusades, the leadership of a central figure was needed. Pope Urban II was the only central figure at the time in the entire West with an authority that transcended all of Western Europe's national boundaries. On November 25, 1095, Pope Urban II delivered in Clermont, France, what was perhaps the single most effective speech in Western history – one that has influenced the West up to the present time. Not only did the Pope appeal to the Western masses through religious motives, but he also used what came to be known as the typical Western ideological argument in support of a colonialist and imperialist policy that eventually led Europe in later generations to brutally colonize the entire non-European world. In this historic speech, Pope Urban II reminded the Europeans that their lands were suffering from widespread economic problems:

"For this land which you inhabit, shut in on all sides by the seas and surrounded by the mountain peaks, is too narrow for your large population; nor does it abound in wealth, and it furnishes scarcely food enough for its cultivators. Hence it is that you murder and devour one another, that you wage war, and that very many among you perish in civil strife."

The Pope then quickly pointed out that the Arab land of Palestine to which they would be going for their Crusade "floweth with milk and honey ... like another paradise of delights." Pope Urban II then passionately exhorted the faithful Westerners: "Set out on the road to the Holy Sepulchre, take that land from the wicked people and make it your own!" After the Pope ended his fiery speech, the entire large European crowd responded jubilantly with a loud roar: "Dieu le veult!" (God wills it!).

In fact, the Western Crusaders were the first great wave of European colonialism since the fall of the Roman Empire in 476. The Crusades took the form of a series of brutal military invasions in the name of "Christianity" to the heart of Arab and Muslim lands in order to brutally colonize Arab Palestine and kill its people. There were at least nine major Western Crusades and many smaller ones launched against the Arabs between 1095 and 1290:

The First (1095-1099); the Second (1147-1149); the Third (1189-1192); the Fourth (1198-1204); the Children's Crusade (1212); the Fifth (1217-1221); the Sixth (1228-1229); the Seventh (1248-1254); the Eighth (1270); and the Ninth (1290). Other ill-starred Western military expeditions against the Arabs continued up to the 15th century. Actually, Europe's hatred and fear of Arab and Muslim power were so intense that the idea of the Crusade persisted well into the 17th century, and the conviction that war might be just and legitimate has since become more deeply engraved in the conscience of the West.

The Crusaders came from all over Western Europe, but France was somehow their main bulwark (from which Pope Urban II himself came). A French monk described the First Crusade, which was launched from France, as *Gesta Dei per Francos* ("the Franks were presented as the chosen instruments of God"!). Not to be outdone by the French in the service of God, however, many other Europeans joined in such as English, Scottish, Welch, Irish, Italians, Germans, Austrians, Spanish, Portuguese, Normans, Belgians, Dutch, Scandinavians, and Swiss. In this mass Crusader army, all classes and segments of Western societies were represented. The Crusaders included kings, knights, aristocrats, feudal lords, priests, hermits, monks, dukes, military leaders, soldiers, zealots, pilgrims, workers, peasants, merchants, common people, and criminals. They also came from both sexes and all ages (see "The Children's Crusade" below).

The most prominent of all the participating fanatics and zealots among the Crusaders, however, was a strange Frenchman by the name of *Pierre L'Ermit* ("Peter the Hermit") from the city of Amiens. *Pierre L'Ermit* was one of history's most bizarre characters, especially for a religious leader. He looked like a madman; small and miserably thin; walked barefooted; rode a jackass for transportation; his wild unkempt hair tumbled over his neck and ears; his unmaintained wild beard came down to his waist; his eyes rolled; his speech was torrential; and his dingy clothes consisted of only a woolen smock and a light cloak which also served him as a blanket at night. *Pierre L'Ermit* was a powerful speaker, though. His fiery speeches hypnotized his Christian listeners who nicknamed him "Kiokio" (or "little Peter"). His followers used his jackass as an object of religious veneration, plucking hairs from its

tail to keep as "holy relics"! It was this strange, barefooted Pierre L'Ermit who led the first column in the First Crusade (known as the Peasants' Crusade) in 1096 against the Arabs and Islam.

In order to raise a large army to fight the Arabs and Islam, Pope Urban II promised that all Crusaders would be exempted from taxes; their debts would be forgiven; their sins would be washed away; and their special place in Paradise would be guaranteed. Consequently, the response to his call was extraordinary. All in all about 160,000, heavily armed Europeans, an astounding figure for that time, formed the armies of the First Crusade. It seemed that the whole of Western Europe was marching east. It was the first time that Western Europe had come together for any cooperative act or cause since the fall of the Roman Empire. Nothing like it has ever happened in the history of the West. European unity was so clear and so purposeful.

The Crusaders came in a seemingly solid mass, some with all of their belongings, to join in this mad holy war to destroy Islam. Their objective was to kill Arabs and Turks whom the Christian terrorist Butcher Pope Urban II described as "an accursed race, a race utterly alienated from God", urging his followers to "exterminate this vile race from our lands." The Crusades took place during the Western dark ages when Europe was backward compared to the Arab/Muslim world and to the Christian Byzantine Empire of East Europe. Hence, the Crusaders' behavior during their vicious wars reflected their cruelty and primitive barbarism. They were extremely militant, and committed incredible mass violence. They acted like modern-day violent American Ku Klux Klan and other Western racist groups. They committed, both in Europe and the Arab/Muslim world, the worst conceivable horrible crimes and atrocities, not only against thousands of innocent Muslims and Jews of both sexes and of all ages, but also even against Christians. Their vicious crimes – all of which will be detailed shortly – against noncombatants and innocent peoples included the destruction of properties; pillaging; plundering; foraging; ravaging; stealing; setting houses on fire; torturing; murdering; executing; burning humans alive; raping women, including nuns; and even roasting and eating (with a great deal of relish) the human flesh of their victims and their children.

It must have seemed that even Mother Nature (or God) was angry with the Crusaders and was horrified by their sordid crimes. Violent earthquakes devastated the Syrian Arab region at various times during the Crusader's 200-year presence in the Arab world. Although the 1157 tremor was the most spectacular, not even one single decade passed – during which the Crusaders were pillaging and killing Arabs – without some major cataclysm. What follows is but a brief account of the Crusaders' vicious 200-year bloody assault on the Arabs and Islam.

III. Carnage in Turkey

Escorted by Byzantine ships in the summer of 1096, the invading Crusaders, led by the fanatic leader Pierre L'Ermit, crossed the Bosphorus into the land of Islam in Turkey. After pillaging and plundering many Greek churches on their way, the Crusaders were heard proudly shouting that they had come to the land of Islam "to exterminate the Muslims." The Crusaders foraged the Turkish countryside, plundered villages and farms and set them on fire. They mercilessly massacred Muslim peasants and burned their young children alive. As pure racists, the cruel Crusaders directed their violence towards any dark-skinned peoples and those who simply wore different clothes from them, regardless of their religions. Pierre L'Ermit's peasant band even attacked non-Latin Christians and slaughtered them in heavy numbers, hung their babies on cooking spits, roasted them over open fires, and ate their flesh. Even Princess Anna Comnena, the daughter of the Byzantine Emperor Alexius I (who had the original idea of the Crusade but who came to dislike the Crusaders like his daughter) reported how they piled up the corpses of their victims to form a high mountain. She also included a description of Crusaders tearing off the limbs of children and roasting others on fire for food.

Nevertheless, the Crusaders' very first encounter with a Muslim army in 1096 in Nicaea (now modern Iznik in Turkey) ended in a crushing military defeat for them and their leader, Pierre L'Ermit, at the hands of Kilij Arsalan (the Red Lion), the Turkish Sultan of that city. But this Muslim victory was short-lived. The next year, in June 1097, the Crusaders mounted a larger military force and, with some help from the Byzantine army, inflicted a major military defeat on the Muslim forces in Nicaea. This time Arsalan was severely beaten at the Battle of Dorylaeum,

and the Muslim Turkish army was cut into pieces. The Crusaders killed, pillaged, and took many Muslims prisoners who were later sold into slavery. News of the defeat of the Turkish Muslims spread like fire into the Arab world and caused a great deal of panic and pain. All Arabs and Muslims considered this first defeat of the scientifically and culturally superior Muslims at the hands of the backward Western Crusaders to be very shameful. It was compared to the old defeat of the highly advanced Roman Empire at the hands of the northern European barbarians.

After their victory in Turkey, the barbaric Crusaders moved south to the Arab lands in their destination towards the Arab province of Palestine. Every Arab village, town, and city in their path was totally gripped by fear. Many Arabs and Muslims fled for their lives, leaving behind their homes and properties. The news of the Crusaders' advances from town to town was closely followed as Arab men and women in complete shock began to whisper to each other and pray in fear.

IV. Bloodbath in Antioch

In February 1098 the Crusaders invaded Edessa (now the modern city of Urfa in Turkey), a large Armenian community located immediately north of Syria, known to the Arabs as al-Ruha. The Crusaders ruthlessly massacred a large number of Edessa's inhabitants and turned the city into the first Latin Kingdom (European colony) in the Muslim world under the leadership of Baldwin I of Boulogne, France. Baldwin I was a knight notorious for his brutality and complete lack of scruples. After he forced the Christian Armenian prince and princess of Edessa to abdicate, he proceeded to murder both of them even though he had already accepted them as his "adopted parents".

Following their easy invasion of Edessa. The Crusaders moved south to destroy Arab Antioch, then the largest city in the Arab region of Syria (now the modern city of Antakya in Turkey). Antioch was well fortified and impossible to penetrate. It had plenty of food and was well protected against invasions and sieges. Its 12,000-meter-long walls were very strong and indestructible. It had about 400 large towers, each of which was 60 feet high. More than 50,000 heavily armed, bloodthirsty, fanatic Crusaders stood at Antioch's gates and laid siege to it for eight long and cold months during the rainy seasons (from October 1097 to June 1098). Their long siege was unsuccessful.

Actually, while the Arabs inside Antioch were enjoying plenty of food, the Crusaders stationed outside it, faced severe hunger and starvation. As a result, the Crusaders invaded, killed, ravaged, and pillaged the surrounding Arab towns and villages, in and around Aleppo, to steal livestock and crops. Frustrated by their long unsuccessful siege of Antioch, the Crusaders finally decided to frighten the city into submission by gruesomely showering it with the mutilated severed heads of murdered Arab Aleppens, catapulting them over the city's strong walls like rain. In fact, the Crusaders' savagery found no boundary. One day they caught a spy, killed him, roasted him on fire and ate his flesh while proudly shouting that this would be the fate of anyone who spied on them!

However, the siege of Arab Antioch suddenly came to a quick and horrific end for its inhabitants. At 4 in the morning on June 3, 1099, one of Antioch's gates was opened for them. A Muslim traitor of Armenian origin by the name of Fairuz, who was facing serious charges of black-market trading and had been slapped with heavy fines by the authorities in Antioch, decided to seek revenge. For a large bribe of gold and land from the European invaders, he allowed the Crusader leader Bohemond I (son of the Prince of Taranto, Italy) to enter Antioch through one of the five main gates that he was guarding. A swarm of Christian European warriors fell upon the sleeping city like uncontrollable madmen. In a short time the Crusaders turned the entire city of Antioch into an incredible scene of fire and blood. Wherever the European Christians found Arab and Muslim women in the city, "they ran their lances through their bellies." All the men, women, and children who tried to flee in the heavy rain through muddy back-alleyways were tracked down by the European knights and slaughtered on the spot. As the day wound down, cries of pleading, fear, and agony from the dying, injured, and fleeing Arabs and Muslims were gradually replaced by loud, cheerful off-key singing of the drunken Crusaders who were by then plundering the entire city of Antioch at will.

Such genocide by the Europeans against the inhabitants of Arab Antioch continued for an entire week as the city itself was reeling under fire and smoke. All Muslims (both Arab and non-Arab) and even native Christians (also Arab and non-Arab alike) were tortured and killed by the thousands, their houses looted and destroyed. By the end of that dreadful week, scarcely a Muslim remained alive, and the streets of Antioch were piled high with Arab and Muslim corpses of both sexes and all ages. Such genocidal episodes punctuated the ruthless Crusaders throughout their brutal occupation of Arab territories.

When an Arab army from Mosul, Iraq arrived too late to save Antioch, its leader Karbuqa and his troops were completely stunned and paralyzed because of what they had seen at Antioch. In fear and total shock, Karbuqa asked the Crusaders for a truce, but without even responding to his offer, the Crusaders charged at him and destroyed his army, which quickly disintegrated "without a stroke of sword or lance, without the firing of a single arrow." After this day of great shame for the Arabs and Islam (especially with the Baghdad Arab caliphs crippled and powerless in the face of the rapidly growing power struggle between them and their Turkish and Persian soldiers) there was no longer any Arab force that could stop the vicious Crusaders from controlling all of the vast Arab region of Syria. Thus, Arab Antioch became the first Latin Kingdom or a European colony in the Arab world (the second one in the Muslim world after Edessa). Antioch fell under the ruthless leadership of the butcher devil, Bohemond I.

V. Butchery and Cannibalism in Ma'arra

Following their vicious capture of Antioch, the brutal Western Crusaders moved on southward, raiding and pillaging town after town on their way to Jerusalem. On their way south, the unfortunate Arab Syrian city of Ma'arra was situated. In December 1098, the city of Ma'arra, whose most important son was the Arab genius philosopher/poet Abu al-Ala al-Ma'arri (973-1057), experienced horrific cannibalism against its Arab inhabitants at the hands of the barbaric European Crusaders. Ironically, this cannibalistic feast was predicted in a way by al-Ma'arri who died only 41 years before it happened. Actually, al-Ma'arri, who deeply influenced Dante, dared to attack religious fanatics (Christians, Muslims, and Jews) and even showed his irreligious audacity (in that early eleventh-century time) by writing: "The inhabitants of the earth are of two sorts: Those with brains, but no religion, and those with religion, but no brains."

The uncivilized Western Christian Crusaders proved al-Ma'arri right by quickly reducing his birthplace to a heap of ruins. A peaceful Syrian agricultural city, Ma'arra had no army or militia. Its economy was based only on grapes, olives, and figs. Its unarmed Arab inhabitants courageously resisted the crippling two-week Crusader siege of their city by all means available to them, including a desperate attempt by hurling packed beehives on the European invaders.

Hopeless and fearful of genocide similar to the one that had taken place in Antioch a few months earlier, most of Ma'arra's notables finally decided to accept the word of the Crusaders' leader, Bohemond, who promised to spare the lives of all the city's citizens if they would surrender. But Bohemond, the ruthless ruler and butcher of Antioch, proved once again that he was the vicious Western animal monster that he really was. In the words of one writer, on December 11, 1089, "The ... [Crusaders] arrived at dawn. It was carnage. For three days they put people to the sword, killing more than a hundred thousand people and taking many prisoners."

The Crusaders' chronicler at the time, Radulph of Caen, not only admitted this genocide, but also added, with pride, the following horrifying words: "In Ma'arra our troops boiled pagan adults in cooking pots; they impaled children on spits and devoured them grilled." Another Christian Crusader chronicler, Albert of Aix, who took part in the carnage of Ma'arra bragged, "Not only did our troops not shrink from eating dead Turks and Saracens [Arabs]; they also ate dogs!"

Actually, even before the massacre of Ma'arra took place, its Arab inhabitants knew very well that there would be cannibalism by the European Christians. The Arabs had seen the fanatic Crusaders, the Tafurs, "roam through the countryside openly proclaiming that they would chew the flesh of ... [Arabs and Muslims] and gathering around

their nocturnal camp-fires to devour their prey." In fact, the barbaric Western Crusaders not only enjoyed cooking and eating the flesh of Arabs and Muslims, but they also found it even "better than spiced peacock."

After the bloody nightmare of Ma'arra, the Western Crusaders moved on southward towards Jerusalem, leaving nothing but destruction and death in their wake. As a result of the two great horrific massacres in Antioch and Ma'arra, the Arabs began to look at the Westerners not only as beasts and wild animals for their brutality and strength, but also justifiably as savages and anthropophagi.

VI. Holocaust in Jerusalem

As the Western Christian armies of doom moved southward, all Arabs and Muslims, who lived in the villages and towns along the road to the Arab city of Jerusalem, took extreme precautions against the brutal Crusaders. The poorest Arabs took refuge by hiding in nearby forests and mountains, preferring to take their chances with hungry lions, bears, hyenas, and wolves in the wilderness rather than facing the invading barbaric cannibals from the West.

The Devil Pope Urban II's bloodthirsty warriors for Christ eventually reached their goal, the city of Jerusalem. The bizarre Crusader leader Pierre L'Ermit was appointed almoner of the Christian army and continued his outrageous preaching, this time at the Mount of Olives, just outside Jerusalem. The Crusaders laid siege to Jerusalem for 40 days. Then in preparation for their assault on Jerusalem, the soldiers of Satan fasted for three days, confessed their "sins", and received communion. Next, they marched barefooted around the walls of Jerusalem, chanting psalms and carrying crosses and relics, in abasement before the 'glory of the Lord'. Suddenly, like madmen devils which they were, they hurled themselves against Jerusalem's walls without carrying even a single ladder! From within Jerusalem's high walls, the Arab garrisons could do nothing but watch the wild European Satans in total horror and astonishment.

Crusader terrorist leader Lord Tancred of Hauteville, France (Bohemond's nephew) promised that if Jerusalem surrendered all Arab and Muslim lives in it would be spared and that the sanctity of all Muslim religious places, especially al-Aqsa Mosque, would be maintained. Accordingly, on Friday July 15, 1099, while the Muslims of Jerusalem were fearfully praying in the mosques for their lives, the Arab governor of Jerusalem surrendered without a fight to Lord Tancred. But once again, just as his uncle had broken his promises in Antioch and Ma'arra by butchering most of their Muslims and Arabs, so did Tancred in Jerusalem. Seized by a frenzy of vengeful blood lust, the heavily-armed European Christian warriors stormed Jerusalem like wild animals, spilling through the streets of the holy city with swords in their hands and indiscriminately butchering every man, woman, and child they could find. They sacked mosques, broke open stores, and plundered houses. Tens of thousands of noncombatants (Arab and non-Arab whether Muslim, Jew, or even native Christian) were beheaded, shot with arrows, thrown from towers, tortured, or burned at the stake.

When their killing finally stopped a week later on Friday, July 22, not a single Arab or Muslim could be seen alive within Jerusalem. Tens of thousands of Arabs and Muslims were lying dead in pools of blood in front of their own houses or stores and outside all of the holy city's mosques, especially around al-Aqsa Mosque, which was shamefully desecrated. It is estimated that more than 70,000 Arabs and Muslims were butchered in cold blood in and around the great mosque of al-Aqsa alone. The Dome of the Rock next to al-Aqsa Mosque was converted to a church by the Crusaders and was stripped of hundreds of silver candelabra and dozens of gold ones. The bodies of the dead Arabs and Muslims in the holy city were slashed open in search of gold or silver coins they might have swallowed. His "holiness" Satan Pope Urban II had decreed that any spoils of war were possessions the faithful could keep. At nightfall, still dripping with the blood of their Arab victims, the Europeans knelt at the "Holy Sepulcher" and folded their bloody hands in prayer, "sobbing for excess of joy."

Some lucky Arabs and Muslims had taken advantage of the chaos to slip away, escaping through gates battered down by the Crusaders. In tears and in pain, the last Arab and Muslim survivors in and around Jerusalem were forced by the Crusaders to perform the most horrible tasks: to drag the bodies of their own dead relatives, to heave and dump them in enormous vacant and unmarked lots, and finally to set them on fire. After performing these

horrible tasks, the Arabs were then beheaded, forcibly drowned, or sold into slavery. Religious historian Ronald Bainton reported that before Jerusalem's murdered Arabs and Muslims were buried en masse, their bodies were mutilated and "a whole cargo of noses and thumbs sliced from [them]" were shipped to Europe as prized trophies!

One proud report to the Butcher Pope Urban II (who died two weeks later on July 29 without knowing that Jerusalem had been captured by his Satan soldiers) read, "If you could hear how we treated our enemies at Jerusalem ... our men rode through the unclean blood of the Saracens [Arabs], which came up to the knees of their horses." One eyewitness of the dreadful scene in Jerusalem not only wrote that "piles of heads, hands, and feet were to be seen in the streets of the city," but that the European Christian murderers had "to pick their way over the bodies of men and horses" all throughout the holy city. Describing the holocaust in Jerusalem, the Archbishop of Tyre (modern Sur) wrote the following:

"... they laid low, without distinction, every enemy encountered. Everywhere was frightful carnage, everywhere lay heaps of severed heads, so that soon it was impossible to pass or to go from one place to another except over the bodies of the slain. ... It was impossible to look upon the vast number of the slain without horror; everywhere lay fragments of human bodies, and the very ground was covered with blood of the slain. It was not alone the spectacle of headless bodies and mutilated limbs strewn in all directions that roused the horror of all who looked upon them. Still more dreadful was it to gaze upon the victors themselves, dripping with blood from head to foot, an ominous sight which brought terror to all who met them..."

The fate of the Jews (Arab and non-Arab alike) of Jerusalem was no less atrocious. During the first few hours of the carnage in Jerusalem, the entire small Jewish community of the holy city gathered in their own main synagogue to pray. The Western blond knights barricaded the exits and stacked all the bundles of wood they could find in a ring around the synagogue. The Temple was then put to the torch. Those Jews who managed to escape were massacred in the neighboring alleyways. The rest were burned alive.

The monuments of saints and the tomb of Ibraheem (Abraham) were also completely destroyed by the Crusaders. One eyewitness wrote that at the Temple of Solomon, where about 10,000 Jews were slaughtered, "men rode in blood up to their knees and bridle reins." [40] In writing about the mutilated Jewish corpses that covered the Temple area, the priest Raymond of Aguilers joyfully quoted Psalm 118: "This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it."

Because of their dark ages mentality, racism, brutality, and deep hatred for any alien culture, the Crusaders did not even spare their coreligionists in the Arab world from their bloodbaths as many native Christians were murdered. The Crusaders proceeded to expel from the Church of the "Holy Sepulcher" all the priests of the Orthodox and Monophysite Oriental rites – Arabs, Greeks, Armenians, Georgians, and Copts – who had formerly worked together peacefully for centuries under Arab/Muslim rule in Jerusalem to officiate Christian religious ceremonies. Completely dumfounded and deeply indignant at this cruel treatment, the local Orthodox Christian priests refused to tell the European invaders where they had hidden the True Cross on which they held the belief that Jesus died. Totally frustrated, the European occupiers arrested the Orthodox priests, tortured them and forced them to reveal its secret location. In addition, Arab and other non-Latin Christians lost their churches and properties, and were displaced from their patriarchates and bishoprics. Even the Arab Maronite Christians (who were in communion with Rome) were contemptuously treated as second-class citizens in their own native Arab land by these invading Westerners. Also, in addition to the "heretic" Muslims and Jews, the Crusaders Devils banned the Arab Coptic Christians of Egypt from going to Jerusalem to conduct their pilgrimage.

For the official celebration of murdering tens of thousands of innocent Palestinian Muslims, Jews, and Christians in cold blood, and for the brutal torture and displacement of local Christians, the victorious European faithful held several glorious Christian religious processions conducted in the streets of Jerusalem by none other than that firebrand preacher, Pierre L'Ermit. Thus Arab Jerusalem became the second European colony in the Arab world (a Latin Kingdom like Arab Antioch) ruled by the bloodthirsty Godfrey (Duke of Lower Lorraine, Germany) from the

French City of Bouillon (now located in southern Belgium). Godfrey made his official residence (of all places) in the sacred Muslim al-Aqsa Mosque of Jerusalem. On the other hand, the perfidious Lord Tancred became the proud Prince of Galilee.

Although the Arabs and Muslims knew very well that they were scientifically and culturally far superior to the Western hordes in every area of science and art, they still feared the European invaders and had nothing but deep hatred and profound contempt for them. One Arab chronicler at the time, Usamah Ibn Munqidh, who had become the leading Damascene specialist on the Crusaders, recorded his observations about the Western Christian fanatic enemies as follows:

"Their soldiers are of mighty courage and in the hour of combat do not think of flight but prefer death. But you shall see none more filthy [sic] than they. They do not cleanse or bathe themselves more than once or twice a year, and then in cold water, and they do not wash their garments from the time they put them on till they fall to pieces. They are a people of treachery and mean character."

A few days after the holocaust in Jerusalem, the first Arab Palestinian refugees arrived in Damascus. Although they were sick in their hearts at having been forced to run for their lives and having to abandon their homes and properties in Palestine – the same way their descendants did in 1948 when the Western Zionists brutally settle-colonized Palestine – they were determined never to return to Palestine until all the European invaders had departed from it forever. They resolved then to awaken the conscience of their Arab and Muslim brothers all over the land of Islam to rise in an Islamic "holy war" or Jihad to expel the Western invaders.

The Arab defence against the savage Western onslaught, however, was a dismal failure from the beginning. The Arabs were, as they are now, divided and in conflict with each other. The Abbasid State was fragmented and had deteriorated into a commonwealth of semiautonomous quarrelsome states governed by Arab or Turkish military commanders. The Abbasid capital city of Baghdad was totally paralyzed, and the weak Arab Abbasid Caliph, al-Mustazhir, was crippled by the power struggle among Arabs, Persians, and Turks.

VII. Slaughters in Other Arab Cities and Towns

Despite such Arab division and quarrels, an army was raised from the Arab region of Egypt to try to expel the European invaders from the Arab region of Palestine. While the Western savage Crusaders were looting Jerusalem and completing their massacres by killing the last few hidden Arab survivors in the holy city, the Egyptian army slowly reached Palestine in August 1099, 20 days after the holocaust in Jerusalem. Aware of its arrival, however, the Crusaders met the Egyptian army near the Palestinian port city of Ascalon where it was camping and completely annihilated it. "Neither foot-soldier, nor volunteers, nor the people of the city [Ascalon] were spared in the killing. About ten thousand souls perished, and the camp was sacked."

Several days after this last Arab defeat and humiliation, a group of Arab refugees led by the Judge of Damascus, Abu Sa'ad al-Harawi, reached Baghdad to plead to the politically crippled Arab Abbasid Caliph, al-Mustazhir, for an Arab/Muslim military defense against the Crusaders. In the Great Mosque of Baghdad, on Friday August 19, 1099, during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, al-Harawi denounced the disgraceful inaction by Muslim leaders and passionately appealed for a Jihad against the savage European invasion. His fiery speech made the Muslim congregation weep. However, despite the fact that al-Harawi carried his appeal as far away as the great corridors of power in Baghdad, his efforts amounted to naught; Baghdad was indeed paralyzed.

Hence, the cruel Western Crusaders felt totally free to continue pillaging, ravaging, and killing Arabs and Muslims with impunity. In 1101 the soldiers of Devil, the Crusaders committed yet another major gory massacre against the Arabs in the Palestinian seaport city of Caesarea. When the Crusaders invaded this quiet city, their troops were given permission to sack it as they pleased. All the Palestinian inhabitants of the city were brought in and murdered in cold blood in the city's great mosque. Also, the following year, in a raging battle near Tripoli in April 1102, the

Crusaders, under the leadership of the brute Raymond of Saint-Gilles (Count of Toulouse, France), relentlessly butchered 7,000 Tripolitanian Arabs.

Even when a golden opportunity was presented to them, the Arabs let it slip by. For example, in May 1102 an Egyptian army took the Crusaders army by surprise in the city of Ramlah, near the port of Jaffa in Palestine. While most of his knights were killed or captured, the king of Jerusalem himself, Satan Baldwin I, barely avoided capture by hiding, while lying flat on his stomach, among the reeds. That day the Egyptian army could have marched unopposed to free Jerusalem from the Europeans, but due to the reluctance and indecisiveness of its leaders, the chance was lost. And, although the Egyptians thereafter kept sending a fresh army year after year to free Jerusalem, they never had the same golden opportunity again. As a result, the Arabs paid dearly both in lives and properties, as they began to lose quickly city after city to the Crusaders.

In 1104, the Crusaders brutally captured three important Arab cities: Jaffa, Haifa, and Acre. Also, after bravely resisting their severe 2000-day siege, Tripoli was invaded and destroyed in July 1109 by the brutal Crusaders who massacred scores of its noncombatant Arabs in cold blood. Tripoli was a magnificent bustling seaport, the jewel of the Arab east, known for its splendid living and beautiful fields of fruits, carobs, olives, and sugarcane. It had talented goldsmiths, brave seamen, scholars, learned judges, and glorious libraries. The uncultured Genoese sailors completely demolished the city's Banu Ammar library, the finest in the Muslim world, which was known as Dar al-Ilm or "House of Knowledge". The Crusaders destroyed all of its 100,000 volumes so that Arab "impious" books would not be read by anyone. Most of Tripoli's citizens were sold into slavery, the rest were despoiled of their properties and stripped of their personal belongings as they were being expelled from the city. Most expelled Tripolitanians found refuge in the nearby Arab city of Tyre. Following the examples of Antioch and Jerusalem, Tripoli became the third European colony in the Arab world, divided into three equal parts. One third came under the colonization of the Genoese, and the other two thirds fell under the brutal control of the cruel son of Raymond of Saint-Gilles.

The following year, in May 1110, the Crusaders selected Beirut as their next target where they committed yet another horrible massacre against scores of innocent Arabs. Then, the following December, they attacked the peaceful seaport of Sayda (the ancient Phoenician city of Sidon), where they cruelly forced all of its Arab inhabitants into a mass exodus to Tyre and Damascus. Thus, in a short period of time, the European invaders brutally captured six of the most renowned Arab cities – Jaffa, Haifa, Acre, Tripoli, Beirut, and Sayda – massacred and/or deported their inhabitants, and desecrated their mosques. These dreadful events sent a chill down the spine of the entire Arab nation as Arab masses throughout the entire Arab world began to fear seriously that Tyre, Aleppo, Mosul, Damascus, Cairo, Baghdad, or even Makkah ("Mecca") itself might be the next target for the European soldiers of Satan.

As a result of this widespread fear, the Aleppo Judge, Abdulfadhel Ibn al-Khashab, organized a large demonstration in the Abbasid capital of Baghdad in February 1111 against the inept Abbasid Caliph al-Mustazhir, demanded an immediate Arab military response, and emotionally called for an Islamic Jihad to expel the Crusaders. But, like his predecessor, al-Harawi 12 years earlier, Ibn al-Khashab's efforts amounted to very little. The Baghdad riots, however, ignited a strong angry feeling all over the Arab world among Arab masses that considered some of their leaders to be shamefully incompetent while some others to be outright traitors.

In fact, some Arab and Turkish governors committed acts of high treason, for their personal gains, by collaborating with the Crusaders in the same fashion as Saudi Arabia's House of Saud, Kuwait's House of Sabah and Pseudo-Hashemite family of Jordan have currently collaborated with the imperialist West and the. For example, after the Baghdad riots, the citizens of Arab Ascalon rose in July 1111 in a violent revolt against their treasonous and cowardly leader, Shams al-Khalifa, who had offered a tribute of 7,000 dinars to the brutal European colonialist Baldwin I of Jerusalem. In return, Baldwin I sent al-Khalifa 300 of his soldiers to protect him against possible insurrection. However, the Palestinian Arab masses became completely outraged and a group of them assassinated al-Khalifa as he was leaving his residence; the 300 Crusader soldiers were also massacred.

Nevertheless, the Crusaders continued to occupy new Arab cities at will. For although the ruler of Aleppo, Najm ad-Din Ilghazi, crushed the Crusaders' army at Antioch in June 1119 on the Syrian plain of Sarmada and killed their new arrogant leader Sir Roger (the son of Prince Richard of Salerno, Italy), who had imposed a tax on every Muslim pilgrim leaving Antioch to Makkah, the overall power of the Crusaders was not affected. The Sarmada defeat, however, like the 1104 Harran defeat before it in Turkey, was nothing more than a temporary setback for the Western soldiers of Satan. In fact, the Europeans brutally captured Tyre in 1124 and thus completed their total control, with the exception of Ascalon, of the entire Arab Eastern coast of the Mediterranean.

VIII. The Arab Victory over the Western Crusaders

Arab victory over the Westerners was painful and slow in coming. The first major turning point for the Arabs came in 1144 at the hands of the governor of Mosul, in the Arab region of Iraq, Imad ad-Din Zangi. Zangi, who owed nominal allegiance to the Abbasid Caliph of Baghdad, liberated Edessa and completely destroyed this first of four Crusader colonies in the Muslim world. Zangi's victory was widely celebrated across the entire Muslim world as Arabs and Muslims began to strongly feel that all the European invaders would soon be expelled from their three other colonies of Jerusalem, Antioch, and Tripoli, as well as from the rest the Arab world.

However, upon receiving the news of Edessa's fall, Pope Eugenius III urgently called for the Second Crusade (1147-1149) against the Arabs in order to recapture Edessa. In an immediate response to his call, powerful European armies were gallantly organized. The Second Crusade was led by the Emperor Conard III of Germany and King Louis VII of France. Although this time heads of European states were personally involved in the military invasion of the Arab world, the Second Crusade achieved nothing, failed to retake Edessa, and ended in a humiliating defeat for the Europeans near Damascus. In the spring of 1148, the deeply pious and ascetic Nur ad-Din (Zangi's son) destroyed the army of the Second Crusade. Upon hearing the news of Nur ad-Din's brilliant military victory over the French King and the German Emperor, the entire Arab world was immediately seized by a sense of elation.

Undaunted by this defeat, however, the occupying Crusaders of the Arab lands continued their murderous campaigns against Arabs and non-Arabs (Muslim, Christian and Jewish) in the Eastern Mediterranean. For example, in the spring of 1156 the Crusader French Knight, Reynald of Chatillon (prince of Antioch: 1153-1160) – a brutal, arrogant, cynical, and contemptible person who would come to symbolize to all Arabs and Muslims everything evil about the West – viciously invaded the Christian non-Arab island of Cyprus. He and his army of Satan ravaged all of the island's cultivated fields, slaughtered all of the livestock, pillaged all of the churches and convents, burned and demolished buildings, raped women, slaughtered old men and children, beheaded poor men, took rich men as hostages, and cut off the noses of all Greek Christian priests. Similar examples of these murderous campaigns took place in October 1168 when the Westerners committed a major gory operation against the Arabs in Bilbays, Egypt. The European Christian Crusaders systematically massacred scores of innocent Arabs (both Muslims and Coptic Christians) including men, women and children without the slightest provocation.

To the Crusaders' misfortune, however, in 1169, the following year, a young military genius gained control of Egypt at the tender age of 31. His name was Salah ad-Din al-Ayyubi (rahmatullah Alayh) (known in the West as Saladin), a man of enormous courage and character. Salah ad-Din was born in the city of Tikrit, Iraq, in which the Iraqi President Saddam Hussein was also born. Not knowing who was Salah ad-Din and what he would come to represent, the soldiers of Satan continued their bloody operations against the Arabs. The utterly detestable Reynald of Chatillon violated the 1180 truce between the Arabs and the Crusaders by plundering a Muslim caravan in its way to Makkah in the summer of 1181. He then launched five galleys on the Red Sea with which he blockaded the Arab port of Elath (Eilat); harassed Arab shipping; raided other Arab seaports including the two Hejazi seaports of Yanbu (the port serving the city of Madinah) and Rabigh near Jeddah; and even threatened the city of Makkah itself.

In 1182, to the horror of all Islam, the Crusaders sank a crowded Muslim pilgrim ship, drowning all aboard. Later, in 1186, the French butcher of Cyprus, Reynald of Chatillon, who had made it his pattern to pillage and massacre

Arabs without restraint, broke yet another truce with Salah ad-Din (rahimahullah) by plundering an Arab caravan in which a sister of Salah ad-Din was traveling. This French animal felt bound by no truce or agreement; he once cynically explained, "What was the value of an oath sworn to infidels?" Again, in 1187, this French murderer raided yet another large caravan of Arab pilgrims and merchants who were peacefully making their way to Makkah. Reynald and his men mercilessly massacred all the armed Arab men and led the rest of the caravan troops into captivity. When some of the captured Arabs reminded him of the truce he had signed with Salah ad-Din, Reynald defiantly answered them, "Let your Muhammad come and deliver you!" When Salah ad-Din (rahimahullah) heard his words, he swore by the Holy Qur'an that he would kill Reynald with his own hands.

In fact, Salah ad-Din – who extended his control from Egypt to the other Arab provinces of Syria, northern Iraq, Barqah (in the Arab region of Libya), the Hejaz, and Yemen – was actually waiting for just such a provocation from the European invaders in order to wage a war against them. War broke out between the Arabs and the Westerners in the summer of 1187 with an immediate blow to the invading Crusaders. On July 4, 1187, Salah ad-Din's (rahimahullah) military genius came into play when he trapped and destroyed an exhausted and thirst-crazed army of Crusaders in the battle of Hittin, near Lake Tiberias in northern Palestine. The Europeans suffered heavy losses; the 20,000 who survived fell into captivity, including the French king of Jerusalem, Guy of Lusignan. Although Salah ad-Din (rahimahullah) displayed his famous magnanimity and spared the lives of the European King of Jerusalem and most of the Western prisoners (most of whom were later set free, including the ones who could not pay their war ransoms), he fulfilled his pledge to God against Reynald of Chatillon. Salah ad-Din (rahimahullah) personally killed this Frenchman by cutting off his head with the sword. Dragging Reynald's dead body by its feet to the captive French king, who began to tremble of fear for his own life, Salah ad-Din said to him, "This man was killed only because of his maleficence and his perfidy."

So great were the Westerners' losses that the Arabs were able to liberate quickly the Crusaders' entire Kingdom of Jerusalem, with the exception of Tyre. The Arab cities of Acre, Toron, Beirut, Jubayl (Byblos), Sayda, Nazareth, Caesarea, Nabulus, Jaffa, Haifa, Ascalon, and Jerusalem were liberated in a few months. After 88 years of European colonization, Jerusalem was back finally under Arab control. As the entire Muslim world was celebrating, Salah ad-Din entered Jerusalem as a liberating hero on Friday October 2, 1187 (Rajab 27, 583 in the Islamic Calendar), the very same day on which Muslims annually celebrate Prophet Mohammad (Peace and Glory of God be on him) nocturnal journey to Heaven via Jerusalem.

In stark contrast to the holy city's conquest nine decades earlier by the Europeans who had perfidiously and barbarically slaughtered its inhabitants, the Arab liberation of Jerusalem was marked neither by a massacre nor by a plunder, but by the civilized and courteous behavior of Salah ad-Din (rahimahullah) and his troops. In fact, Salah ad-Din (rahimahullah) not only strengthened the guard at the Christian places of worship to protect them from harm by unruly Muslims, but he also announced that all unarmed Westerners were welcome to come to Jerusalem on pilgrimage whenever they liked. Local Arab and non-Arab Christians welcomed Salah ad-Din (rahimahullah) in Jerusalem as a liberator. Arab Jews as well as non-Arab Jews were also allowed to resettle in Jerusalem. The only Arab lands left in the hands of the Western invaders were the city of Tyre as well as the two European colonies/kingdoms of Tripoli and Antioch.

IX. The Incredible Massacre in Acre

Upon hearing the news that the Arabs had recaptured Jerusalem, Pope Gregory VIII went into a fit. Highly outraged, he immediately called for the Third Crusade (1189-1192) to capture Jerusalem and punish the Arabs. This time, the West responded with the largest Crusader army to date led by the greatest three monarchs in all of Europe: Frederick Barbarossa, king of Germany and "Holy" Roman emperor; Richard I, the so-called "Lion-Heart", king of England; and Philip II Augustus, king of France. Hence, the Third Crusade is dubbed the "Kings' Crusade."

However, before achieving anything, the Third Crusade suffered a major setback on June 10, 1190, when Frederick Barbarossa suddenly died. The Holy Roman emperor died not by Salah ad-Din's sword, but rather by drowning

while swimming in a shallow stream, the Saleph River, at the foot of the Taurus Mountains in Turkey. As a result, the German Crusader army was dispersed. Nonetheless, the English and French kings proceeded with their troops and took Acre in 1191 after a very gruesome battle with the Arabs. The siege and battle of Acre, which took two years, was the most protracted and desperate bloody episode in the Arab world. Twenty-four thousand Arab fighters died in that battle and about 6,000 others were wounded.

After the fall of Acre, King Richard proceeded to loot a large amount of gold and other fortunes from its Arab inhabitants. Then, contrary to his promises to spare the lives of the surviving Arabs in Acre, under the surrender terms he had accepted, the English King issued orders to the Anglo-French troops on August 20, 1191 that led to one of the most cowardly and atrocious massacres the Crusaders ever committed during their 200-year bloodbath in the Arab world. On that very hot and humid day in August, the entire surviving population of Acre, 2,700 Arabs – men, children, and women with babies clinging to them – were chained and roped to prevent their escape and restrict their movement. Totally frightened and deeply confused, the weeping and praying Arabs were then driven like animals with whips and clubs to the top of a low hill called Ayyadieh to meet their awful fate. One author describes what happened next to these 2,700 Arabs as follows:

“Richard’s men began to carry out his orders to kill them all. Swords, spears, knives, axes all flashed in the sun as they rose and fell. This time the children were not saved for the slave market, but were butchered with their fathers and mothers. Even babies in their mother’s arms felt the knives of the blood-drenched Christians ... The killing completed, Richard’s army started back to the city, while on the top of the hill a few loot-crazed butchers lurched from one body to another with their bloody knives, hastily disemboweling corpses to recover any gold pieces that might have been swallowed for concealment ... Nor were the prisoners and their families the only deaths he [king Richard I] was responsible for that day. As news of the slaughter spread throughout Saladin’s empire, Christian prisoners everywhere were tortured and murdered in reprisal for the infamy...”

After defeating a small battalion of Salah ad-Din’s (rahumahullah) army at the Arab Palestinian village of Arsouf, fifteen miles from Jaffa, the English king celebrated his looting and murdering of thousands of innocent Arabs in cold blood by proudly accepting and then arrogantly bestowing upon himself the courageous nickname the “Lion-Heart”. To the English, he may be the “Lion-Heart”, and to the French he may be “Le Coeur de Lion”, but to all Arabs and Muslims King Richard I of England has always been viewed as a cowardly butcher, a perfidious criminal, and a murderous thug.

Nevertheless, frustrated by their inability to fulfill the Third Crusade’s main goal, the capture of Jerusalem from Salah ad-Din (rahimahullah), the two European monarchs of England and France returned as failures to their respective countries. Before leaving for Europe, however, the English king signed a peace treaty in 1192 with Salah ad-Din that limited the European invaders to Tyre and a narrow coastal strip from Jaffa to Acre. The treaty also gave unarmed European pilgrims the right to visit Jerusalem. On the other hand, Salah ad-Din (rahimahullah) was so emotionally wounded by the European perfidious massacre in Acre that he shed many painful tears and spent long sleepless nights in total agony. He passed away in 1193 in Damascus with a broken heart at the young age of 55, blaming himself for the whole tragedy.

X. The Last Ten Crusades and Their Atrocities

Still full of hatred towards Muslims and Arabs, especially after the Third Crusade failed to take Jerusalem from the Arabs, Pope Innocent III urgently called for the Fourth Crusade (1198-1204) to be directed this time at Egypt, the most powerful Arab region. However, the Fourth Crusade was even a bigger failure than the Third. It never even reached the Arab world as planned. The wily Doge of Venice and the rich Venetian merchants who controlled the finances of the Fourth Crusading army diverted it to its original and natural commercial ends by attacking and seizing the rival Christian Dalmatian Seaport City of Zara (now modern Zadar in Croatia). In November 1202, the unrestrained soldiers of God completely pillaged and destroyed Zara. Then in 1204, for good measures, they went and sacked Constantinople itself, the glorious Byzantine capital of the Christian Eastern Roman Empire whose

emperor Alexius I, ironically, was responsible for the original idea of a Western Crusade against the Arabs and Islam. The Crusaders and Venetian merchants then established the Latin Empire of Constantinople, which lasted until 1261. While brutally conquering the capital city of their fellow European Christians in East Europe “to the honor of God, the Pope and the empire”, the Crusaders were permitted to rampage and steal as they pleased for three days. They broke into the city’s main Cathedral of Hagia Sophia, shattered the large silver crosses, ripped away the hangings, and stole many valuables. They even raped nuns and put a prostitute on the Patriarch’s throne to sing a dirty French song. Finally, they drank the “holy” altar wine out of chalices, and threw all the Christian ikons and bibles down on the floor to be trampled under their feet.

Eight years later, in 1212, saw the most bizarre and pathetic Children’s Crusade in which 100,000 Western European children took part. One third of these European children, composed mostly of French and German youngsters, was eventually lost or sold into slavery and prostitution by none other than their own Western fellow Christians. A 12-year old French farm boy named Stephen of Cloyes insisted that Christ had asked him to organize a children’s crusade to liberate Jerusalem from the Arabs. Tens of thousands of destitute French youngsters, who endured hardships of hunger and diseases, answered Stephen’s call and marched with him south to the French seaport city of Marseille where they expected God to part the waters of the Mediterranean for them so that they could walk dry-shod all the way to Palestine. Instead, their French slave-trader compatriots from Marseille lured them into ships and sold them into slavery to the Arabs. The same year another absurd and ridiculous crusade against the Arabs, composed this time of tens of thousands of helpless German children, was launched. Organized by the German youngster Nicholas of Cologne, the second Children’s Crusade got no further than Italy. Many of the German youngsters suffered a great deal from want and exhaustion, and many of the young girls ended up in Roman brothels.

Nevertheless, because the Fourth Crusade attacked the Christian Byzantine Empire instead of its intended target, Egypt, Pope Innocent III called for the Fifth Crusade (1217-1221) to attack this vital Arab region of Egypt. Chiefly manned by French and German Crusaders, the Fifth Crusade failed to destroy Egypt. However, it managed to capture Damietta, near the Nile River, where the Crusaders committed various atrocities in 1218-19. One of their most notorious crimes was the drowning of almost 1,500 innocent Arabs and Muslims by sinking their ship near Damietta. And, once again, the European Christian Crusaders treated the local Arab Christians with total contempt. They regarded the Egyptian Copts (Monophysite Christians) as heretic as Muslims. Fortunately for the Arabs, however, the Egyptian Sultan, al-Malik al-Kamil, Salah ad-Din’s (rahimahullah) nephew, managed to beat the Fifth Crusade in 1221 and force the European soldiers of Satan out of Egypt.

Nonetheless, seven years after the Fifth Crusade was repelled from Egypt, the Sixth Crusade (1228-1229) was launched. Strangely this new Crusade was bloodless. It was launched as a diplomatic Crusade by the most powerful Western monarch, Frederick II, King of Germany and Sicily, who was under excommunication by Pope Gregory IX. Skeptical of all religions, including Christianity, Frederick II openly flouted papal authority. In 1229, Frederick II negotiated a very strange and special treaty with Sultan al-Kamil of Egypt by which he peacefully obtained European control of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Nazareth for ten years.

Although Frederick II enjoyed a positive image in the Arab world because he spoke and wrote good Arabic; had a great admiration for Arab civilization; was surrounded by an entourage of Arab and Muslim advisors; and had nothing but contempt for the barbarous West, especially for the Pope, his unusual treaty with al-Kamil to take control of Jerusalem still aroused a storm of indignation throughout the Arab world. When al-Kamil’s extremely generous treaty with Frederick II expired in 1239, the Arabs recovered Jerusalem in 1244 and permanently ended the Crusaders’ occupation of the city. However, al-Kamil’s treaty with Frederick II has been compared by many Arab and Muslim scholars not only with the 1979 sell-out of Camp David Treaty, signed by Egypt’s Anwar as-Sadat and Israel’s Menachem Begin, but also with the more recent so-called “peace process” of the 1990s that Yasser Arafat signed with Israel.

Nevertheless, violent and militant Western crusading efforts against the Arabs continued. The French King Louis IX gallantly led the Seventh Crusade (1248-1254) against Egypt. However, like the Fifth Crusade thirty years earlier, the Seventh Crusade failed in its mission miserably. Soon after he captured Damietta where he offended the Egyptian Christian Copts by appointing a Catholic prelate as Patriarch of their city, the Egyptians soundly defeated King Louis IX. The French King was also deeply humiliated when he was personally captured as a prisoner. He was not released until he paid a high ransom. The Egyptians finally allowed him to rejoin his wife in the Western-occupied Arab city of Acre.

Totally exhausted by the Crusades' continuing devastating wars and destruction for over 150 years, the Arab world was not ready or able to defend itself against a new and dangerous enemy, the Mongol hordes from the East. In 1258, the Mongols, under their vicious leader Hulagu (or the Barack Obama of his day), completely destroyed Baghdad and effectively ended Arab civilization. The Mongols pillaged Baghdad; murdered one million Muslims in it; destroyed its palaces and mosques; burned its libraries and schools; dumped Arab scientific and other treasure books in the Tigris River; destroyed the Iraqi irrigation canal systems; and executed the last Abbasid Caliph and all of his Arab ruling family. Although the Arab world has never completely recovered from this Mongols' crushing defeat, Muslim civilization itself continued for centuries thereafter under the powerful leadership of the Ottoman Turks.

However, in 1260, two years after the destruction of the Abbasid State, a brilliant Arabic-speaking Turkish leader from Egypt by the name of az-Zahir Baybars severely crushed the Mongol forces at Ayn Jalut, near Nazareth, in Palestine and ended their brief destructive presence in the Arab world. Baybars then dealt very harshly with the Western Crusaders, who collaborated with the ruthless Mongols, and mercilessly killed them. He recovered from the Crusaders several Arab cities: Arsouf in 1265; Atlit, Haifa and Safed in 1266; and Jaffa and Antioch (their prized-colony) in 1268.

Nevertheless, undaunted by either his earlier humiliating defeat and captivity in Egypt during the Seventh Crusade or by Baybars' stunning military victories both against the invading Mongols and Crusaders, King Louis IX of France tried once again to beat the Arabs in 1270 by launching the Eighth Crusade. This stubborn French monarch, who was full of hate for the Arabs and Islam, decided this time to "cut" the Arab world in half by invading Tunisia. Instead, he cut his own life short when he died of a virus near Tunis on August 25, 1270. His accursed body was then taken back to Paris where he was ceremoniously buried as a "saint".

Another major military defeat for the Crusaders in the Arab world took place in 1271 when the great Baybars of Egypt captured their most formidable fortress in Syria, Hisn al-Akrad (known in French as Crak des Chevaliers), which not even the powerful Salah ad-Din (rahimahullah) had been able to conquer. This immense Crusaders fortress is still in existence today dominating the Syrian plains of Bukaya, reminding all Arabs of the past Western Christian terrorism, and making them draw parallels to the present Israeli and American brutal policies in Arab lands.

In 1289 the Crusaders also suffered another major military defeat when the new Egyptian ruler, Sultan al-Mansur Qalawun, thrilled the entire Muslim world by capturing Tripoli, the Crusaders' last kingdom/colony in the Arab world. After this defeat, the European invaders were left with only one Arab city under their control, the port-city of Acre, now under the brutal rule of King Henry of France.

These military defeats suffered by the Crusaders in the Arab world made Pope Nicholas IV panic and led him in the summer of 1290 to respond to King Henry's appeal for fresh reinforcements. Launched under the Pope's order, the Ninth Crusade was composed of a large fleet full of European Christian chauvinists. It sailed from Italy directly to the Western-occupied Arab city of Acre. Once in Acre, the Western soldiers of Satab began to drink heavily. They then rushed drunkenly through its streets, indiscriminately attacking and killing Arab merchants, innocent bystanders, and any man wearing a beard regardless of his religion. Many Arab and non-Arab Christians were murdered in cold blood. These crimes and atrocities made the Egyptian leader Qalawun extremely angry. He swore

by the holy Qur'an that he would not lay down his arms until he drove all of the European invaders out of the entire Arab world and into the Mediterranean Sea. However, it was only after Qalawun's death in 1290 that his own son, Sultan al-Ashraf Khalil, who in 1291 liberated Acre (the last Western hold in the Arab world), fulfilled his wish. While the French King Henry and most other European notables quickly ran away from Acre to hide in Cyprus, all other Westerners in the city were captured and mercilessly killed by Khalil's troops. The liberation of Acre took place exactly 100 years, almost to the day, after the Europeans had brutally re-captured it from the Arabs in 1191 and massacred all its inhabitants under the orders of King Richard I of England. Sultan Khalil of Egypt was to go down in history as the ruler who finally expelled the last of the West Europeans by putting an end to two centuries of their terrorism and cruel colonization in the Arab world. While all Arabs were celebrating their last victory over the Crusaders, they were also at the same time praying and asking God to grant that the barbarian terrorist Westerners never set foot again in the Arab world.

The Arab prayer was answered, but only for a few decades. Seventy-four years after their expulsion from Acre, the stubborn Westerners organized yet another Crusade in 1365 under the command of King Peter of Cyprus. Considered to be the last of the great international Crusades, this Tenth Crusade was launched against the mostly Christian Arab City of Alexandria. It was yet another totally pointless brutal invasion by the West in which thousands of Arab Christians, Muslims, and Jews were massacred in cold blood. Even the Latin traders had their stores and houses looted and destroyed by King Peter's Crusaders. However, the Tenth Crusade, which was quickly repelled by the Arabs, ended with the assassination of King Peter himself.

Nevertheless, in 1395 when the Turkish Muslim army was laying siege on Constantinople, the Byzantine emperor Manuel II Palaeologus appealed to the rulers of Europe for help. Responding to his call, the "Holy" Roman Emperor/King Sigismund of Hungary organized in July 1396 the Eleventh Crusade against Islam and the Arabs. The objective of the Eleventh Crusade was not only to evict the Muslim Turks from the Balkans, but also to march into Syria and to "liberate" Jerusalem from the Arabs. Led by Sigismund in September 1396, this Crusade was also composed of Western knights from the Balkans, France, Burgundy, Germany, England, and the Netherlands. However, before it had a chance to achieve any of its objectives, the Eleventh Crusade was decisively crushed at Nicopolis, Greece, by Muslim power under the strong Turkish leadership of Sultan Bayazid I.

Again, 48 years later the terrorist Europeans organized the Twelfth Crusade against the Muslim Turks in the Balkans. In November 1444, however, the forces of Sultan Murad II quickly repelled the invading Westerners at the Bulgarian Black Sea port of Varna. In reality, the Eleventh and Twelfth Crusades were not only miserable failures that weakened the West, but they also contributed to the growing strength of Islam. The Muslim Turks became militarily stronger; captured Constantinople; destroyed the Byzantine Empire in 1453; tightened their control over the Balkans; advanced further into Eastern and central Europe where they spread Islam; and even occupied southern Italy in 1480-81. Ironically, however, these Turkish Muslim successes against the invading Westerners took place at a time when the Arabs themselves were quickly losing their final foothold in Andalusia to the Spanish Christians whose Inquisition was yet another form of Western terrorism against Muslims and Jews.

However, after the Ottoman Turks took Cyprus in 1570, they suffered their first major setback in October 1571 when the Thirteenth Crusade (composed of a combined European armada) destroyed their fleet at Lepanto (Navpaktos), near the Greek coast. The Ottomans, though, restored their fleet within a year. Nonetheless, the Western idea of launching Crusades and wars against the Arabs and the Muslim Turks continued well into the 15th, 16th, and even the 17th centuries. In fact, the violent European colonization which had started at the end of the 15th century first against the natives of the Americas, Australia, New Zealand, Asia, and Africa, eventually found its way into the weakened Ottoman Empire during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The Western powers' destruction of the Ottoman Empire, the last Muslim empire, at the beginning of the 20th century, has brought about the current subjugation of the Arabs to the brutal Western imperialism which created Jewish Israel in 1948 over the land of Palestine.

XI. The Legacy of the Terrorist Crusaders

By launching their violent Christian wars against Islam and the Arabs, the Crusades in fact not only hastened the destruction of the Arab Abbasid civilization at the hands of the Mongols, but also indirectly helped bring about the emergence of Turkish power in Arab and Muslim lands with the exception of Arab Andalusia, Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.

Also, thanks to the cruel Western Crusaders, many Arab Muslims have become weary of some Arab Christians. The relationship between the two brotherly Arab communities has since been somewhat strained. Before the arrival of the Crusaders in Arab lands, Arab Muslims throughout the entire Fertile Crescent used to join their Arab Christian brothers in celebrating Christmas, Epiphany (the Christian Feast of the Three Kings), Palm Sunday, and Easter Sunday.

Although the Crusades were initially launched by the West to unite Western and Eastern European Christians, as well as to defeat the Arabs and Islam, they miserably failed on both accounts. The Crusaders' vicious wars on their "fellow" Greek Orthodox Christians of Byzantium and their barbaric destruction of Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade (1202-1204), brought an effective end to any serious reconciliation between the Western European and the Eastern European Christian Churches; seriously weakened the Byzantine Empire and made it an easy prey for the Muslim Turks; and discredited the Papacy by making it lose face among many of its followers.

Moreover, all of the Crusaders colonies in the Arab world were completely destroyed. Islam itself emerged from its defensive wars against the Crusaders to become an even stronger force under the Turks. The Muslim Turks expanded Islam farther into Eastern and Southeastern Europe at the expense of the European Christians in places like Albania and Bosnia. The final coup de grace came in 1453 when the Muslim Turks destroyed the Eastern Roman Empire itself, conquered its great capital city of Constantinople, renamed it Istanbul, and even made it their proud capital city for 470 years. In fact, nowadays Istanbul has some of the most magnificent mosques in the entire Muslim world, some of which used to be Byzantium churches such as the great Cathedral Hagia Sophia, which in 1935 was turned into a Turkish museum by the current Turkish secular republic.

Nonetheless, the dark-ages Crusaders – who were a group of savages with rough manners from the crude castles, fields, and tangled forests of West Europe – were amazed and dazzled by the great cultures and civilizations of both the Arabs and Byzantium that they had invaded. They had an opportunity to see and experience first hand many new things and ideas that in time they adopted and incorporated into their own daily lives. Through their long brutal crusading wars against Islam, Western Europeans learned a great deal from the Arabs. For example, they learned the art of raising and training carrier pigeons to send messages from town to town, the sport of falconry, and the Chinese art of papermaking. Also, Italians adopted the glass-making techniques of Tyre; French villagers learned the arts both of weaving lustrous fabrics and of cultivating silkworms; and farmers throughout Western Europe began to plant sugar cane from Tripoli and plum trees from Damascus. While West European men learned to enjoy the sensuous comfort of Muslim steam baths, their women started using glass mirrors instead of polished metal disks. Cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, cardamom, and other aromatic spices of the East began to find their way into the dull Western cookery. Also, many new items such as rugs, silk, ivory, camphor, musk, and pearls began to appear and to be appreciated in Europe for the first time after the Crusades had opened Western eyes to the riches and life style of the East. In fact, Arab sciences, ideas, crafts, and skills which reached West Europe – both as a result of the Crusaders' violent contacts with the Arabs of the east as well as from Europe's contact with Arab Andalusia in the west – hastened the West's climb from the depths of its dark ages.

In addition, many new Eastern political, economic, and cultural ideas reached Western Europe and began to change dramatically the face of the West. Among the most important of these changes was the emergence in West Europe of a new merchant class that was hungry for trading with the Arabs and the East. As this new business class grew in strength, it began to seriously rival European feudal lords, knights, and barons both in wealth and social status. Consequently, the old West European dictatorial feudal and manorial systems quickly came tumbling down, and West Europe was no longer backward. The well-known Italian explorer, Marco Polo – who made his famous journey to China (1271-1295) immediately after the Eighth Crusade – not only increased West Europe's interest in trading

with the East, but also inspired other Western explorers like Christopher Columbus to search for a direct sea route to India.

As a result of the centuries of Western conflicts and contacts with the Arabs, the age of the greedy Western international capitalism and brutal colonialism/imperialism has emerged to the detriment and misery of the native peoples of North America, Central America, South America, the Caribbean, the Pacific, New Zealand, Australia, Tasmania, Asia, Africa, and the Arab world. Hence, the most important legacy of the Crusaders has been the sanctification of Western violence against non-Europeans in pursuit of imperialist and capitalist ends. The underlying concept of European holy wars against the Arabs and Islam has outlived its religious origin and has been absorbed in the institutions of Western governments. When European kings, knights, and other rich upper classes grew stronger after the Crusades, they secularized the concept of justifiable violence and extended it into the politico-economic sphere. In effect, the Western State has since replaced the Western Church as a holy cause.

Finally, the savage Western Crusades against the Arabs were a starting point of a millennial bitter hostility between the Arabs and the West and its effects are still lingering on. The Crusaders' gory massacres and barbaric cannibalism in the Arab world created a great deal of hate for the imperialist West which has since been ingrained in the hearts and minds of most Arabs and Muslims. And since the 19th century new waves of Western aggression and wars against the Arabs have been taking place. Arab hatred for the West, because of the Crusades, has been painfully re-ignited by the vicious Western colonization and dismemberment of the Arab nation during the 19th and 20th centuries; by the American brutal imperialism and wars in Arab and Muslim lands; and by the violent creation of the Western Zionist state of Israel with the help of the imperialist West over the land of Palestine in 1948.

Instead of Western Christians, this time Western Zionist Jews have made a similar dubious claim on Palestine. Using far more sophisticated deadly weapons than the old Crusaders, the Zionist-Jews (or the new Western "crusaders") have been committing Crusade-like bloody massacres since 1948 against innocent Palestinians and other Arabs, both Muslim and Christian. The West has always been obsessed with stealing the holy land from the Arabs, and so history repeats itself.

Purpose of tax on every Muslim obligation and most important faith of religion:

Sadaqah is only for the poor [fuqaraa] and the needy [masakin] and for those employed to collect the funds ['amilina 'alayha] and for bringing the hearts together for Islam [mu 'allafah qulub] and for freeing captives [fir-riqab] and for those in debt [gharimin] and for the cause of Allah [fi sabilil-lah] and for the wayfarer [ibn as-sabil] - an obligation imposed by Allah [faridatam-minal-lah]. And Allah is Knowing and Wise [Al Qur'an 9:60. The Qur'an Arabic Text with Corresponding English Meanings, Saheeh International, Abulqasim Publishing House, Riyadh, 1997, p 254].

Zakah is a very important. It is in a way fundamental, central, vital and integral component of Muslim life and economy. There is, however, some misunderstanding, misperception and confusion among the people as to the meaning of this verse [Al Qur'an 9: 60] and what expenditure is endorsed, allowed and permitted under the purview of this verse of the Qur'an.

Here in this article, an effort has been made to explain the verse 9: 60 of the Qur'an quoted above. In explaining the verse, earlier scholars of Islam have been quoted to delve deep and extract greater meanings of the verse while expounding and clarifying it. The best way of explaining a verse of the Qur'an is to take help and assistance of another verse of the Qur'an. That has been followed in explaining verse 9: 60 of the Qur'an.

It needs to be clarified why the word used in verse 9: 60 is sadaqah not zakah. This needs to be addressed to satisfy the query of a section of people. It needs to be observed that this verse ends with the words: faridatam-minal-lah [thus is it] ordained by Allah [Al Qur'an 9:60. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, The Holy Qur'an, Amana Corporation, Brentwood, Maryland, U. S. A., p 456].

The word ordained indicates an obligation. That means the sadaqah referred in this verse is obligatory in nature and not voluntary. It is obligatory on the part of Muslim community to make organized efforts to realize zakah. It is a matter of raising public fund, whose management should primarily be in the hands of a public body.

Verse 9: 60 of the Qur'an, if read together with verse 9: 103 [Take O Muhammad from their wealth a charity. The Qur'an, Arabic Text with Corresponding English Meanings, p 263] then it becomes clear that collection and distribution of zakah is the responsibility of the Islamic state. This is the view of some prominent scholars and jurists. Prof. Dr. Yusuf al Qaradawi, Dean of the Faculty of Shariah, Qatar University holds the same view [Yusuf al Qaradawi, Poverty and It's Solution in Islam, Adam Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi – 110002, 2004, pp 139-140].

But the scope of distributing zakah at the individual level cannot be denied. The Prophet's Companion Mughirah may Allah be pleased with him narrated that his servant handed over a portion of zakah to the sultan meaning the representative of the state or government and some zakah he distributed [Yusuf al Qaradawi, Poverty and It's Solution in Islam, pp 138-139].

The state collected zakah of the wealth and property that is visible. But personal property like ornaments, zakah against such wealth and property were distributed by the possessors themselves.

The obligatory nature of sadaqah mentioned in this verse is reflected from the position taken by Abu Bakr may Allah be pleased with him, the first caliph, when he took up position that he would wage war against any person refusing to pay zakah and making difference between prayer, salah and zakah [Bukhari and Muslim].

Incidentally it is called zakah because one's wealth grows through blessings of giving it and prayers of those who receives it, and because it purifies its giver of sin and extols him by testifying to the genuineness of his faith [Ahmad ibn Naqib al-Misri (fourteenth century shafi faqeeh), Reliance of the Traveller: A Classic Manual of Islamic Sacred Law, tr. into English and Edited by Nuh Ha Mim Keller, amana publications, Beltsville, Maryland, U.S.A., 1997, p 246].

That the verse [Al Qur'an 9: 60] contained instruction regarding collection and the management of zakah ['amilina 'alayha] proves the rationality of the teachings of Islam and how pragmatic is its ordinances. Allah just did not leave the realization of this obligatory charity as a mere wish but made ordinance, arrangement by which the realization of zakah has become possible and effective, a practical phenomenon.

Fuqaraa – masakin: As regards distributing zakah money among the fuqaraa and masakin - poor and needy, the prevailing view among a section of people and also a section of ulama, religious scholars, is that the amount of zakah shall have to be distributed strictly among the poor Muslim and needy Muslims although the verse is silent in this respect. Nobody can say Allah forgot to mention the qualifying word Muslim before poor and needy [nauzu billah – I seek refuge in Allah]. The Qur'an has not sanctioned payment of zakah in view of the recipient's claim to faith.

Moreover, if we read instruction of this verse [Al Qur'an 9: 60] together with verse 2:126 of the Qur'an in which Allah responded to the prayers of Prophet Ibrahim peace and blessings be upon him and said that He will also provide disbelievers sustenance then it becomes clear that zakah money can be paid to any poor and needy irrespective of whether such a person is a believing Muslim or not. Sheikh-ul-Islam Allama Shabbir Ahmad Usmani commenting on the verse 2: 126 of the Qur'an in his commentary Tafseer Usmani, expressed the view that the

unbelievers would also be given food in the world [The Noble Quran, Tafseer Usmani, English tr. Mohammad Ashfaq Ahmad, Maktaba-e-Matloob, Karachi, Footnote 185, p 51]

The money of the zakah is not only for Muslims, but such money can be spent on anyone who lives under the control of the Islamic government [Yusuf al Qaradawi, Poverty and It's Solution in Islam, p 167]. Caliph Umar bin Khattab was of the opinion that it was lawful to pay zakah to the Christian and Jews [Yusuf al Qaradawi, Fiqhuz Zakah Bengali tr. Islaamer Zakat Bidhan, Islamic Foundation Bangladesh, Vol II, p 210].

From this point of view, establishing charitable trusts with zakah money to look after poor, needy, orphan and widow, irrespective of religious faith, also deem to be permissible, as also the related expenditure for materializing the objectives.

The verse 9:60 of the Qur'an regarding distributing zakah money among the poor and needy if read together with verse 2: 245 [yuqrudul-laha qardan hasana - who is it that will offer up unto Allah a goodly loan - meaning sacrificing one's life in, or devoting it to, His cause. Muhammad Asad, The Message of the Qur'an, Dar Al Andalus, Gibraltar, Note 234, p 54], 5: 12 [aqradtumul-laha qardan hasana – and loan to Allah a beautiful loan – the phrase means spending in the cause of Allah. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, The Holy Qur'an, Note 710, p 250 or offer up unto Allah a goodly loan – meaning doing righteous deeds. Muhammad Asad, The Message of the Qur'an, Note 23, p 144], and 57:11 [yuqrudul-laha qardan hasana - offer up unto Allah goodly loan - the meaning is apparently wider, applying to all that man may do selflessly, for the sake of Allah alone. Muhammad Asad, The Message of the Qur'an, Note 11, p 837] makes it clear that there is no scope of taking a narrow view on the category of recipient of zakah money. These three verses of the Qur'an underlined the broad the approach of Islam.

Moreover, the sadaqah money has to be distributed secretly for that is better [Al Qur'an 2: 271, Muhammad Asad, The Message of the Qur'an, p 60 and Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan & Dr. Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din Al-Hilali, Interpretation of the Meanings of The Noble Qur'an (a summarized version of At-Tabari , Al-Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir with comments of Sahih Al-Bukhari), Dar-us-Salam Publications, Saudi Arabia, p 93] and without any fanfare for Allah does not love those who spend their possessions on others only to be seen and praised by men [Al Qur'an 4: 38, Muhammad Asad, The Message of the Qur'an, p 111] or show-off as Allama Shabbir Ahmad Usmani puts it [Noble Quran,Tafseer Usmani, Note 59, p 339] or as Sayyid Qutb puts it: Allah does not love those who spend their wealth for the sake of ostentation [In the Shade of the Qur'an Fi Zilal al Qur'an, The Islamic Foundation, Markfield, U.K., Vol. III, p 141].

Some recipient of the zakah has to be recognized identifying them from their mark for some will never ask for help or will not beg because of modesty [Al Qur'an 2:273] or as Sayyid Qutb puts it: In every generation there will be people not able, for various reasons, to earn their livelihood, but who insist on preserving their modesty and personal dignity by not becoming a burden on anyone else. They do their utmost to hide their poverty and distress, and only a few people are able to detect and appreciate their predicament [In the Shade of the Qur'an Fi Zilal al Qur'an, Vol. I, p 446].

Allama Shabbir Ahmad Usmani explaining the verse 2: 273 of the Qur'an - thou shalt know them by their face puts it: For the propagation of Islam a group of proficient scholars ... required in the Muslim society. Their life ought to be dedicated to Islam only. When busy in the grand service of Islam, they can't pay heed to the economic activities. The divided attention could not bring about perfect results. Hence Muslim society is bound to serve such persons ...Today it is incumbent on the Muslims to help such persons – students memorizing the Quran, learning the Islamic sciences, or scholars teaching the Muslim community ... Such souls have distinct color and can be known by their enlightened faces, their self-mortified behavior, their contented gesture not begging of men importunately [Noble Quran,Tafseer Usmani, Note 441, p 157].

Ahmad ibn Naqib al Mistri explaining the verse 2: 273 of the Qur'an puts it: If ... he is engaged in attaining a knowledge of some subject in Sacred Law such that turning to earning a living would prevent the acquisition of this knowledge then it is permissible for him to take zakah because the attainment of knowledge is a communal

obligation [Ahmad ibn Naqib al-Misri, Reliance of the Traveller: A Classic Manual of Islamic Sacred Law, tr. into English and Edited by Nuh Ha Mim Keller, p 268].

In this connection, it would be appropriate to mention verse 51: 19 of the Qur'an [and in their wealth and possession has a right of the needy who ask and the mahrum – poor who does not ask] and verse 70: 24-25 of the Qur'an [in whose possessions there is a due share for such as ask for help and such as are deprived who do not and cannot beg]. In the above verses of the Qur'an, in recognizing the right of the poor who asks and poor who does not ask, Allah in His Infinite Mercy and Wisdom did not make it a condition that only Muslims poor and Muslim needy would have right over the property of the rich.

Imam Razi equated the poor as the dependent of Allah [Al Razi, al-Tafsir al-Kabir, Vol. 16, pp 103 quoted in Yusuf al Qarawadi's book Poverty and its Solutions in Islam, p 132]. When poor are the dependent of Allah how we can deny zakah to the poor and needy.

Moreover, as zakah is a social security system, non-Muslims cannot be excluded from its benefit. In fact the social security of Islam encompasses the entire community, no matter believer or disbeliever.

Naturally questions may be raised if zakah can be paid for the purposes of mu 'allafah qulub - to win hearts of non-Muslims, how reasonable it would be to raise objection to distribute zakah among the poor and needy non-Muslims.

Explaining the verse 5: 8 [witness to truth in all equity, Muhammad Asad, The Message of the Quran, p 143, just witness, Muhammad Muhsin Khan and Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din Al-Hilali, Interpretation of the Meanings of The Noble Qur'an, p 176 or witness to fair dealing, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, The Holy Qur'an, p 248 or bearing witness with Justice, Muhammad Mohor Ali, A Word for Word Meaning of the Qur'an, Ipswich, Jam'iyyatulhyaa' Minhaaj al Sunnah, 2003, Vol. 1, p 332] Ibn al Arabi said that treating the peacefully coexisting non-Muslim with qist does not mean mere justice. It means, rather, that you should give them some of your own wealth as a means of maintaining good relationship with them. What is meant by qist is not justice (adl), for justice is required in treating one who fights against Muslims as well as one who does not fight [Al Qurtubi, 59, quoted in Dr. Jamal Badawi's Inviting People of Other Faith Communities to Islam]:

If sharing wealth with non-Muslims is recommended, how reasonable it would be to oppose the distribution of zakah among the poor and needy non-Muslims.

As regards poor and needy it would be appropriate to mention hadith qudsi narrated by Abu Horayrah may Allah be pleased with him. Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him said, Allah will ask on the Day of Judgment: O children of Adam, I asked you for drink but you did not give Me drink. The son of Adam will say: O my Lord, You are the Lord of the worlds, how can I give You drink. Allah will say: Such of My servant asked for drink but you did not give him drink. If you would have given him drink, you would have got it from Me [i.e. he would get the return from Allah in the Day of Judgment] [Muslim abridged]. From this it becomes clear how close the poor and needy are to Allah whether they are believers or disbelievers.

Mu 'allafah qulub: And those whose hearts are to be won over [Muhammad Asad, The Message of the Qur'an p 269] or to attract the hearts of those who have been inclined towards Islam [Muhammad Muhsin Khan and Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din Al-Hilali, Interpretation of the Meanings of The Noble Qur'an, p 288] or for those whose hearts have been recently reconciled to the truth [Abdullah Yusuf Ali, The Holy Qur'an, p 456], I believe that such works fall within the purview of fi sabili-lah – way of Allah as it is part of the da'wah work, calling people to the teachings and guidance of Islam.

There seems to be no valid basis for making distinction between sinful Muslims and unbelievers as far as the need to reconcile faith is concerned. In fact a person's sinfulness does not disqualify him from receiving help. My understanding is that it is permissible to use zakah money to win heart of any people, even non-practicing Muslim, and also the related expenditure for preaching the teachings of Islam and strengthen their faith.

However, under the existing international laws, treaties, agreements and conventions to which Muslim countries are signatories along with other countries, the prisoners of war have to be exchanged and there is no scope of holding prisoners for indefinite period. The Muslim countries are bound to honor treaty obligations [Al Qur'an 5: 1 - fulfill all obligation. Abdullah Yusuf Ali explained the verse to mean that states have to discharge treaty obligation faithfully. The Holy Qur'an, Note 682, p 243].

Moreover, verse 47: 4 of the Qur'an makes it obligatory to set the prisoner free either by the act of grace or against ransom [Muhammad Asad, The Message of the Qur'an, p 778]. Abdullah Yusuf Ali holds the same view and recommended the release of the prisoner of war without ransom or with ransom [The Holy Qur'an, Note 4822, p 1316]. In the Quran there is no provision for taking prisoners as slave.

Gharimin: Explaining the verse freeing those in debt [Al Qur'an 9:60] Abdullah Yusuf Ali commented: Those who are held in the grip of debt should be helped to economic freedom [The Holy Qur'an, Note 1320, p 456]. Muhammad Asad explaining the verse those in debt [Al Qur'an 9:60] commented: The term al-gharimun describes people who are overburdened with debts contracted in good faith, which – through no fault of their own – they are subsequently unable to redeem [The Message of the Qur'an, Note 85, p 270].

My understanding of the verse – freeing people in debt – is that the recipient of such category of people should be paid handsome amount to make them solvent and uproot the causes of poverty, in other words to salvage them from the cycle of debt instead of the existing system of distributing zakah.

Fi sablil-lah: Verse 9:60 of the Qur'an specifically mentions fi sablil-lah - for the cause of Allah [Muhammad Muhsin Khan and Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din Al-Hilali, Interpretation of the Meanings of The Noble Qur'an, p 288] or for every struggle in the cause of Allah [Muhammad Asad, The Message of the Qur'an p 270] as an independent head of expenditure and not mixed up with other heads of expenditure as discussed above. Here, I shall make an attempt to elaborate the verse further.

We all know that Qur'an is free of meaningless repetition and, therefore, we have to treat fi sablil-lah as separate and independent head of expenditure distinct from other heads of expenditure of zakah. Under this head, all welfare activities may be financed from zakah funds other than those clearly covered by the other seven heads of zakah expenditure.

The expression in the way of Allah has a wide and general connotation and encompasses all good deeds which please Allah. Some scholars, therefore, believe that zakah may be spent on all good purposes.

Our duty is to come out of the prevailing narrow, stringent and inflexible outlook and approach and embrace the broad road of Islam while interpreting the Text, a comprehensive stance

If we look at the dictionary meaning of fi sablil-lah, etymologically sabil means road and sabilil-lah means road to earn the pleasure of Allah. It is those activities that bring good and well-being to the people and take man close to Allah.

The core and inherent meanings of fi sablil-lah include all those activities by which common people are benefitted, all kinds of activities the purpose of which is human wellbeing.

Jihad is more general and comprehensive than military defense. It encompasses intellectual, academic, scientific, cultural, social, economic, educational, health, medical, environmental and civilizational fields and includes media jihad.

The objective of jihad is to educate the ignorant, employ the unemployed, train workers, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, house the homeless, treat the ill, achieve self-sufficiency for the needy, build schools for pupils, universities for students, mosques for worshippers, clubs for gymnastic.

The need is for huge number of competent preachers, teachers and media experts, all ably trained to call people towards the teachings and guidance of Islam – jihad by da'wah and address contemporary world issues and challenges and meet the threat of military and cultural invasion.

Those who stand in defense of Islam are also entitled to receive zakah for the very purpose is fi sabilil-lah. The vast majority of the scholars state that the category of zakah recipients for the sake of Allah is restricted to those participating in jihad who are not receiving a stipend from the public treasury or whose stipend is not sufficient for their needs. There was no standing army at that time and volunteers of jihad were paid stipend.

They are of the view that zakah money can be spent to build cantonments, to purchase armaments including aircraft, tanks, armored carriers, ships, aircraft-carrier and to build and repair military airports, roads, bridges, culverts, rail line for the movements of troops.

In my understanding jihad includes jihad with words also. Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him said: Telling the truth to a despotic ruler is jihad [Fiqh al Jihad, p 173]. In another narration Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said: One who will fight by using tongue i.e. protest by using words is a believer [abridged Muslim]. It is an all-embracing concept.

It is sanctioned to use zakah funds for those who are working in the field of da'wah and to support and assist their efforts. They are included in the recipient category, for the sake of Allah, mentioned in the verse. This is the resolution of the Fiqh Academy of Rabetat al Alam al Islami, the Muslim World League. Those who are engaged to fight the onslaught of anti-Islamic propaganda to defend Islam – ghuzaat - are also entitled to receive Zakah. Ghuzaat by other scholars of Islam has been explained as assisting Islamic cause.

In the military defense today, it is most important to prepare the Muslim nations against the psychological war of the enemy and defend the cultural frontier. People involved in defense are the preachers, poets, writers, researchers and filmmakers. They come forward to establish the truth of the rightful cause by their thought provoking writings and ideas in opposing the propaganda of the enemies against Islam and Muslims. Today it is most important to establish institutions that will train manpower to meet the western military and ideological challenges and the threats of missionary activities side by side by producing highly skilled dayees - the preachers of Islam who will call people towards the teaching of Islam and defend the cultural frontier.

For all these purposes zakah money may be spent for the objective of armed-jihad and those that are mentioned above i.e. jihad by words, preaching or publicity is the same. Here the reason or illat is the same.

The essential objective of fi sabilil-lah is to ensure common good such as to pursue education, support scholars for they are the inheritors of prophets, al ulamu warasatul ambiaa and establish educational institutions – religious schools – madrasa and Islamic libraries to face the mal-propaganda of the missionaries. This is important for educational curriculum in the public institutions are controlled by such people who are basically secular, not paying any attention to religious studies and some educational institutions are controlled by Christian missionaries who are active in pursuing their own agenda.

We must not forget that like military-jihad, efforts to safeguard religion and aqeedah- belief is also a jihad which is no less important and not less important than ibadah, worship and establishing institutions like masjid where people can learn Islam. It is also important to establish orphanages and hospitals for the Christian missionaries are using such institutions to blackmail the backward members of the Muslim community to forward their agenda. Such institutions can be established by using the zakah money for the very purpose or the illat is to preserve and safeguard Islam.

As mentioned earlier, jihad includes jihad with words, therefore, any verbal da'wah, preaching or even writing a piece for the cause of Islam is also jihad. Da'wah is one of the recognized fields of jihad as jihad can be exercised through purifying one's self, educating others using one's tongue or pen and – with the fulfillment of certain prerequisites – through striving against evil. Spending zakah money for cultural activity, establish cultural center and center to train muballig, highly qualified and competent preacher of Islamic call and guidance and publish book that will uphold the beauty and superiority of Islam, which will at the same time answer all unfounded allegations against Islam and will completely remove smokescreen, all misgivings about Islam from the people's mind no doubt fall within the purview of fi sabilil-lah where zakah money can be spent without any doubt and hesitation. I think spending zakah money for cultural activity and publicity purposes should get priority and it would be better to spend zakah money for such purposes. Jihad fi sabilil-lah is not limited to military defense only.

Muhammad Asad explaining the verse for every struggle in the cause of Allah [Al Qur'an 9: 60] commented: The expression in the cause of Allah embraces every kind of struggle in righteous causes, both in war and peace, including expenditure for the propagation of Islam and for all charitable purposes [The Message of the Qur'an, Note 85, p 270]. Abdullah Yusuf Ali explaining the verse 9: 60 of the Qur'an commented: Those who are struggling and striving in Allah's cause by teaching ... who are thus unable to earn their ordinary living ... have a claim on charity [The Holy Qur'an, Note 1320, p 456]. In my understanding, teaching means preaching.

Ibn as-sabil: As for assisting the wayfarer, can this be elaborated to mean that we can use zakah money for people who are engaged in research as being part of fi sabilil-lah, wayfarer cut off from everything and living for Islam only. Prof. Dr. Yusuf al Qaradawi is of the opinion: If one is totally engaged in pursuit of knowledge and cannot afford time to continue quest for earning, such a seeker of knowledge can consume zakah money to the extent necessary for the benefit of such endeavours is not limited to the recipient but largely affects the Muslim ummah as a whole [Yusuf al Qaradawi, Poverty and its Solution Islam, p 151]. Qaradawi further elaborated: It is for this reason that Imam Ghazzali, Shatibi and many other eminent scholars found nothing wrong in spending zakah not only for acquiring religious knowledge but for acquiring knowledge of the other fields that is necessary for worldly life. They favored spending zakah for people who are exclusively engaged in the pursuit of knowledge [ibid p 158].

Explaining the verse 2: 177 Muhammad Asad commented: The expression ibn as-sabil (lit., "son of the road") denotes any person who is far from his home ... In its wider sense, it describes a person who, for any reason whatsoever, is unable to return home ... for instance, a political exile or refugee [The Message of the Qur'an, Note 145, p 36]. Thus in today's world situation zakah can be a tool to mitigate the sufferings of the refugees who are displaced in many parts of the world due to political unrest and turmoil.

Hopefully these few lines will suffice to clarify some of the misperception among the people. In explaining the verse 9: 60 of the Qur'an I have tried to be careful as much as humanly possible. My intention is not to overstep in any way in explaining the meaning of the verse and while trying to expound the verse. May Allah forgive me for any mistake done or wrong committed in this respect. Allah knows the best.

I want to conclude making an appeal to the readers of this article that whoever pays zakah, particularly those who pay substantial amount of zakah, they should spread over the amount among all the eight heads of expenditure of zakah so that no sector is neglected or ignored. We must not forget that Allah in His Infinite Mercy and Wisdom has planned all these sectors keeping in view the eternal need. So let us follow instruction of Allah as ordained.

Lastly, my understanding is that if the zakah of the Muslims of the whole world, no matter wherever they live, could be collected and gathered at one place, establishing a central control, this would have indeed played vital role in minimizing much of the sufferings of the humankind, there is no doubt about it, and many problems of humans could have been tackled. #

7 REASONS WHY GOD IS WORTHY OF WORSHIP

God makes it very clear that the purpose of our lives is to worship Him, "And I did not create the jinn (spirit world) and mankind except to worship Me."

The concept of worship in the Islamic tradition is profound. Worship entails that we must know, love and obey God, as well as single out and dedicate all acts of worship to Him alone. If we want to know, love and obey something other than God the most, including direct acts of worship (like ultimate gratitude) to something other than Him, then that is our object of worship. In this sense, human beings, including those who do not believe in God, cannot not worship. However, many misdirect their worship to things other than God; something this essay aims to address.

According to the Islamic spiritual tradition, acts of worship are accepted if they fulfil two conditions. The first is that the act of worship should be done purely for the sake of God. The second is that the action itself is prescribed by the Islamic source texts: the Qur'an and the authentic Prophetic traditions. So a natural question that follows from this is: What are these acts of worship?

The acts of worship are many. Any good action that is done to please God is an act of worship. However, there are some basic acts of worship which are essential to Islamic spiritual practice. These have been summarised by the Prophet Muhammad as the five pillars of Islam. They include: affirming and recognising in one's heart that there is no deity worthy of worship except God and that Muhammad is God's final messenger; praying five times a day; giving the obligatory charity if one can afford to; fasting in Ramadan (the 9th month of the Islamic calendar) and performing the pilgrimage if one is able to do so. These acts of worship have profound meanings and inner dimensions. These are the basic pillars of Islam. However, in developing one's spiritual practice one can engage in a plethora of additional spiritual activities. These include: reciting the Qur'an; remembrance of God; removing the spiritual diseases in one's heart; voluntary charity; repentance; spiritual reflection; conveying the message of Islam to others; feeding the poor; spreading peace; taking care of animals; studying the life of the Prophet Muhammad; memorising the Qur'an; the night prayer; reflecting on natural phenomena and much more.

Since our reason for being is to worship the Divine, it is important to understand why we must dedicate all acts of worship to Him alone. In this chapter, I will provide 7 reasons for why we must worship God and dedicate all acts of worship to Him alone. These reasons include:

1. God is worthy of worship by virtue of who He is.
2. God has created and sustains everything.
3. God provides us with innumerable favours.
4. If we love ourselves, we must love God.
5. God is The-Loving, and His love is the purest form of love.
6. Worship is part of who we are.
7. Obeying God is the most rational thing to do.

Knowing God

Before I discuss the above reasons, it is important to elaborate on what is meant by knowing God. Knowledge of God is essential to understanding why God is worthy of our worship, because we cannot worship something we are ignorant of. This is why, in the Islamic tradition, traversing a path of knowing God is a form of worship:

"So know, that there is no deity except God."

To know God means that we affirm that He is the sole creator and maintainer of everything that exists (known as Oneness of God's Creativity). It also entails that we affirm His names and attributes in the context of recognising

that they are unique and that nothing can compare to God (known as Oneness of God's Names and Attributes). Knowledge of God also involves that we must know that He is unique in His Divinity; He alone is entitled to all acts of worship (known as Oneness of God's Divinity). It must be noted that in Islamic theology it is critical to affirm that nothing whatsoever shares in God's creative power and ability, names and attributes, and Divinity. All forms of anthropomorphism are completely rejected. God is transcendent and maximally perfect. He has no imperfections. The concept of oneness in the Islamic spiritual tradition is referred to as tawheed, which linguistically means to affirm oneness or to make something one or unique.

Oneness of Creativity

The oneness of God's Creativity is to affirm and recognise that God is the sole creator, master and owner of everything that exists. God is the One who sustains, takes care of, and nourishes everything. According to the Islamic doctrine of tawheed, anyone who denies this has associated partners with God, which is polytheism (known as shirk in Islamic theology). Anyone who believes that these descriptions of God can be shared by any created thing has deified that thing. Therefore, they have associated partners with God.

Oneness of God's Names and Attributes

The 'oneness of God's names and attributes' means to describe God only by the names and attributes by which He has described Himself, which are found in the Qur'an and the Prophetic teachings (some names such as Al-Khaaliq, The-Creator, and Al-Qadeer, The-Powerful, can be affirmed by a sound rational mind). These names and attributes, such as The-Loving and The-Subtle, are affirmed but they are not comparable to creation. God's names and attributes are perfect without any deficiency or flaw, God is maximally perfect. God's names are described by God Himself as the most beautiful:

"The most beautiful names belong to God: so call on Him by them." [3]

The one who compares these names and attributes to creation has committed humanisation, and therefore has associated partners with God. The one who compares any created thing to God has committed deification, which is also a form of associating partners with God.

Oneness of God's Divinity

The oneness of God's Divinity is that we must affirm that all acts of worship must be directed to Him alone. Someone who directs acts of worship to anything other than God, and the one who seeks reward from anything other than God in any act of worship, has associated partners with Him.

In certain contexts, some acts of worship such as the internal acts of worship, if directed to other than God, do not constitute associating partners with Him. For example, one's love for God may be deficient and require perfecting. Associating partners with God in the context of love would involve loving something or someone instead of God or as much as God. Someone can love their family and it would not constitute associating partners with God. If they loved their family instead of God or as much as God, then that would constitute a form of associating partners with Him.

The gravest sin

Associating partners with God is the gravest sin. The consequence of this sin is that the one who dies in such a state and has not repented dies in a state of disbelief. This will never be forgiven by God. (This applies to major forms of associating partners with God. There are lesser forms that do not lead to disbelief, such as giving charity for other than God, obeying someone instead of God and showing off one's good deeds. However, major forms of associating partners with God such as praying to other than Him and believing other things are worthy of worship lead to disbelief):

“Indeed, God does not forgive association with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills. And he who associates others with God has certainly committed a tremendous sin.”

However, if one associates partners with God and repents to Him and returns to the path of oneness, he or she will be forgiven, and their transgressions will be transformed into good deeds:

“And those who invoke not any other deity along with God... Except those who repent and believe, and do righteous deeds; for those, God will change their sins into good deeds, and God is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.”

The one who has associated partners with God and has never repented, and dies in that state (and has no excuse), has essentially oppressed themselves by closing the door to God’s mercy. Their hearts have ‘eternally’ rejected God’s guidance and mercy; therefore, they have alienated themselves from the Divine. Those who reject God will plead to go back to earth to do righteousness, but their hearts have ‘eternally’ rejected:

“[For such is the state of the disbelievers], until, when death comes to one of them, he says, ‘My Lord, send me back that I might do righteousness in that which I left behind.’ No! It is only a word he is saying.”

This self-imposed spiritual reality is a form of denial. The person has denied all the just and fair opportunities that God has given them to embrace His mercy and love:

“God has not wronged them, but they wronged themselves.”

“This is reward for what your hands have done. And God is never unjust to His servants.”

It must be noted that according to Islamic theology, if someone was not given the right message of Islam, and sought the truth, they will have an excuse and will be tested on the Day of Judgment. God is The-Just and no one will be treated unjustly. This is why, when a non-Muslim has passed away, it is considered un-Islamic to pass judgment on their final abode (however, some scholars have said this may not apply to those who never sought the truth or had sufficient knowledge of Islam). No one knows what is in someone else’s heart and whether someone was given the right message in the right way. However, from a creedal and societal point of view, non-Muslims who died will be buried as non-Muslims. This does not mean that this is their final judgement. In reality, God is maximally and perfectly just and merciful, so no one will be treated unmercifully and no one will be treated unjustly.

People who have heard the message of Islam in a sound and correct way will have to account for their denial. However, whoever dies without having heard the message of Islam, or heard it in a distorted form, will be given an opportunity to accept the truth. Echoing the principles from the various verses of the Qur'an and the Prophetic traditions, Al-Ghazali summarises this nuanced approach. He argues that people who never heard the message of Islam will have an excuse: “In fact, I would say that, God willing, most of the Byzantine Christians and the Turks of this age will be included in God’s mercy. I’m referring here to those who live in the farthest regions of Byzantium and Anatolia who have not come into contact with the message... They are excused.”

Al-Ghazali also argues that the people who heard negative things of the Prophet Muhammad and his message will also be excused: “These people knew the name ‘Muhammad’, but nothing of his character or his qualities. Instead, all they heard since childhood is that a liar and imposter called ‘Muhammad’ claimed to be a prophet... This party, in my opinion, is like the first party. For even though they’ve heard his name, they heard the opposite of what his true qualities were. And this does not provide enough incentive for them to investigate [his true status].”

The true teachings of Islam are a barrier to extremism. In my view, all forms of extremism are based on an ‘ideological hardness’ that hardens people’s hearts. What I mean by this is that people adopt non-negotiable, binary and negative assumptions about the world and other people. This makes one group of people ‘otherize’ another. Otherization is not simply labelling people as belonging to other groups. This is natural and part of modern society. Otherization usually happens when one group describes another group in a negative way and maintains

that each member is the same. This hardens people's hearts and prevents them from positively engaging with other people who seem to be different. Islam does not otherize people. It does not assert that everyone who is not a Muslim is ultimately doomed or evil. The Qur'an makes it quite clear that people constituting other groups "are not all alike" and describes some of them as "upright" The Qur'an also applies this concept to believers too; some are righteous and some are not. Nevertheless, Islam teaches that every human being must be treated with mercy, compassion and fairness.

7 Reasons why God is worthy of worship

1 God is worthy of worship by virtue of who He is

The best place to start is to understand who God is. God, by definition, is the One who is entitled to our worship; it is a necessary fact of His own existence. The Qur'an repeatedly highlights this fact about God,

"Indeed, I am God. There is no deity except Me, so worship Me and establish prayer for My remembrance."

Since God is the only Being whose right is our worship, then all of our acts of worship should be directed to Him alone.

In the Islamic tradition, God is considered a maximally perfect Being. He possesses all the perfect names and attributes to the highest degree possible. For example, in Islamic theology, God is described as the The-Loving, and this means that His love is the most perfect and greatest love possible. It is because of these names and attributes that God must be worshipped. We always praise people for their abilities, kindness, knowledge and wisdom. However, God's power, kindness, knowledge and wisdom are to the highest degree possible with no deficiency or flaw. Therefore, He is worthy of the most extensive form of praise, and praising God is a form of worship. In this light, God is worthy of worship by virtue of who He is.

God is also the only One entitled to our supplications and prayers. He knows best what is good for us, and He wants what is good for us. Such a Being with these attributes must be prayed to, and be asked assistance of. God is worthy of our worship because there is something about God that makes Him so. He is the Being with the most perfect names and attributes.

An important point regarding worshipping God is that it is His right, even if we are not recipients of any type of comfort. If we were to live a life full of suffering, God must still be worshipped. Worshipping God is not dependent on some kind of reciprocal relationship; He gives us life, and we worship Him in return. Do not misunderstand what I am saying here: God showers us with many blessings (as I will discuss below); however, He is worshipped because of who He is and not necessarily how He decides—via His boundless wisdom—to distribute His bounty.

We praise people due to their sporting skill, eloquence, strength or any other attribute. We do so even though they do not benefit us in any direct way. Similarly, God deserves extensive praise by virtue of His perfect names and attributes, and not as a result of how He decided to manifest them in our lives. If we can praise people who have limited and flawed attributes, what does it mean on how we must praise God whose names and attributes have no deficiency or flaw?

2 God has created and also sustains everything

There is something in your life that you receive freely, yet you do not earn it and do not own it. There is no good reason to believe that you deserve it either. This thing is this moment, and the next moment, and all of the moments of your existence. You do not earn these moments, so what can you possibly do to earn another instant in your life? This is exactly why in popular culture we call it a gift: the gift of life. If you knew that you had 10 hours left to live and in order to live another 3 days you had to give away all of your wealth, you would immediately do

so. That's why we all consider it to be so precious. You do not own these moments because you do not have the capacity to bring anything into existence; you cannot even create a fly. You do not deserve another moment of your existence because it is not yours; you do not have the ability to produce life, even for a second. Therefore, nothing that you do can be deserving of something that you can never acquire by yourself.

In light of these basic truths, you must always be in a state of gratitude, because you always receive something that you neither earn, nor own, nor deserve. These moments of our existence are from God alone, therefore we must be thankful to God, and acknowledge that all gratitude belongs to Him alone. Gratitude is a key aspect of worship.

God has created everything; He continually sustains the entire cosmos and provides for us out of His bounty. The Qur'an continually repeats this concept in various ways, which evokes a sense of gratitude and awe in the heart of the listener or reader:

“It is He who created for you all of that which is on the Earth.”

“Do they indeed ascribe to Him as partners things that can create nothing but are themselves created?”

“O mankind, remember the favour of God upon you. Is there any creator other than God who provides for you from the heaven and Earth? There is no deity except Him, so how are you deluded?”

Therefore, everything we use in our daily lives, and all of the essential things that we require to survive, are due to God. It follows then that His is all gratitude. Since God created everything that exists, He is the owner and master of everything, including us. Hence, we must be in a sense of awe and gratitude to Him. Since God is our Master, we must be His servants. To deny this is not only rejecting reality, but it is the height of ingratitude, arrogance and thanklessness.

Since God created us, our very existence is solely dependent on Him. We are not self-sufficient, even if some of us are deluded in thinking that we are. Whether we live a life of luxury and ease or poverty and hardship, we are ultimately dependent on God. Nothing in this universe is possible without Him and whatever happens is due to His will. Our success in business and the great things that we may achieve are ultimately because of God. He created the causes in the universe that we use to achieve success, and if He does not will our success it will never happen. Understanding our ultimate dependency on God should evoke an immense sense of gratitude and humility in our hearts. Humbling ourselves before God and thanking Him is a form of worship. One of the biggest barriers to Divine guidance and mercy is the delusion of self-sufficiency, which is ultimately based on ego and arrogance. The Qur'an makes this point clear:

“But man exceeds all bounds when he thinks he is self-sufficient.”

“There is the one who is miserly, and is self-satisfied, who denies goodness—We shall smooth his way towards hardship and his wealth will not help him as he falls. Our part is to provide guidance.”

3 God provides us with innumerable favours

“And if you should [try to] count the favours of God, you could not enumerate them. Indeed mankind is [generally] most unjust and ungrateful.”

We should be eternally grateful to God because we could never thank Him for His blessings. The heart is an appropriate example to illustrate this point. The human heart beats around 100,000 times a day, which is approximately 37,000,000 times a year. If we were to live up to the age of 75, the number of heartbeats would reach 2,759,400,000. How many of us have even counted that number of heartbeats? No one ever has. It is actually impossible to count that many heartbeats. Firstly, for the first few years of your life you cannot count. Already there's a few years of backlog. Secondly, you cannot count your heartbeats while you are sleeping. To be able to count a lifetime's worth of heartbeats, you would have had to start counting each heartbeat from the day you were

born and while you were asleep. This would interfere with your ability to live a normal life, as you would always be counting every time your heart started a new beat. As a practical matter it is impossible. However, every heartbeat is precious to us. Anyone of us would sacrifice a mountain of gold to ensure that our hearts function properly to keep us alive. Yet we forget and deny the One who created our hearts and enables them to function. This illustration forces us to conclude that we must be grateful to God, and gratitude is a form of worship. The above discussion just refers to heartbeats, so imagine the gratitude we must express for all the other blessings God has given us. From this perspective anything other than a heartbeat is a bonus. God has given us favours we cannot enumerate, and if we could count them, we would have to thank Him for the ability to do so.

4 If we love ourselves, we must love God

Loving God is a fundamental aspect of worship. There are many types of love and one of these includes self-love. This occurs due to the desire to prolong our existence, feel pleasure and avoid pain, as well as the need to satisfy our human needs and motivations. We all have this natural love for ourselves because we want to be happy and content. The psychologist Erich Fromm argued that loving oneself is not a form of arrogance or egocentricity. Rather, self-love is about caring, taking responsibility and having respect for ourselves. This type of love is necessary in order to love others. If we cannot love ourselves, how then can we love other people? There is nothing closer to us than our own selves; if we cannot care for and respect ourselves, how then can we care for and respect others? Loving ourselves is a form of 'self-empathy'. We connect with our own feelings, thoughts and aspirations. If we cannot connect with our own selves, how then can we empathise and connect with others? Eric Fromm echoes this idea by saying that love "implies that respect for one's own integrity and uniqueness, love for an understanding of one's own self, cannot be separated from respect and love and understanding for another individual."

If a person's love for himself is necessary, this should lead him to love the One who made him. Why? Because God created the physical causes and means for human beings to achieve happiness and pleasure, and avoid pain. God has freely given us every precious moment of our existence, yet we do not earn or own these moments. The great theologian Al-Ghazali aptly explains that if we love ourselves, we must love God:

"Therefore, if man's love for himself be necessary, then his love for Him through whom, first his coming-to-be, and second, his continuance in his essential being with all his inward and outward traits, his substance and his accidents, occur must also be necessary. Whoever is so besotted by his fleshy appetites as to lack this love neglects his Lord and Creator. He possesses no authentic knowledge of Him; his gaze is limited to his cravings and to things of sense." [22]

5 God is The-Loving, and His love is the purest form of love

God is The-Loving. He has the purest form of love. This should make anyone want to love Him, and loving Him is a key part of worship. Imagine if I were to tell you that there was this person who was the most loving person ever, and that no other love could match his love; wouldn't that instil a strong desire to get to know this person, and eventually love him too? God's love is the purest and most intense form of love; therefore, any sane person would want to love him too.

Given that the English word for love encompasses a range of meanings, the best way to elaborate on the Islamic conception of God's love is to look into the actual Qur'anic terms used to describe Divine love: His mercy (rahmah), His special mercy (raheem) and His special love (muwadda). By understanding these terms and how they relate to the Divine nature, our hearts will learn to love God.

Mercy

It is said that another word for love is mercy. One of God's names is The-Merciful; the Arabic word used is Ar-Rahmaan. This English translation does not fully represent the depth and intensity that the meaning of this word

carries. The name Ar-Rahmaan has three major connotations: the first is that God's mercy is an intense mercy; the second is that His mercy is an immediate mercy; and the third is a mercy so powerful that nothing can stop it. God's mercy encompasses all things and He prefers guidance for people. In God's book, the Qur'an, He says,

"...but My mercy encompasses all things...."

"It is the Lord of Mercy who taught the Qur'an."

In the above verse, God says He is The-Merciful, which can be understood as the "Lord of Mercy", and that He taught the Qur'an. This is a linguistic indication to highlight that the Qur'an was revealed as a manifestation of God's mercy. In other words, the Qur'an is like one big love-letter to humanity. As with true love, the one who loves wants good for the beloved, and warns them of pitfalls and obstacles, and shows them the way to happiness. The Qur'an is no different: it calls out to humanity, and it also warns and expresses glad tidings.

Special Mercy

Connected to Ar-Rahmaan is Ar-Raheem. These names share the same root as the previous, which comes from the Arabic word for womb. The difference in meaning however is significant. Ar-Raheem refers to a special mercy for those who want to embrace it. Whoever chooses to accept God's guidance has essentially accepted His special mercy. This special mercy is for the believers and it is manifested in paradise; unending, blissful peace with God.

Special Love

According to the Qur'an, God is The-Loving. The Arabic name is Al-Wadood. This refers to a special love that is apparent. It comes from the word wud, which means expressing love through the act of giving: "And He is the Forgiving, The Loving."

God's love transcends all of the different types of love. His love is greater than all worldly forms of love. For example, a mother's love, although selfless, is based on her internal need to love her child. It completes her, and through her sacrifices she feels whole and fulfilled. God is an independent Being who is self-sufficient and perfect; He does not require anything. God's love is not based on a need or want; it is therefore the purest form of love, because He gains absolutely nothing from loving us.

In this light, how can we not love the One who is more loving than anything we can imagine? The Prophet Muhammad said, "God is more affectionate to His servants than a mother to her children."

If God is the most loving, and His love is greater than the greatest worldly love we have experienced, this should instil in us a deeper love for God. Significantly, this should make us want to love Him by being one of His servants. Al-Ghazali aptly said, "For those endowed with insight there is in reality no object of love but God, nor does anyone but He deserve love."

From a spiritual perspective, God's love is the greatest blessing anyone can ever achieve, as it is a source of internal tranquillity, serenity, and eternal bliss in the hereafter. Not loving God is not only a form of ingratitude, but the greatest form of hate. Not loving the One who is the source of love is a rejection of that which enables love to occur and fill our hearts.

God does not force His special love on us. Although, by His mercy, He lovingly gives us every moment of our lives, to fully embrace God's love and be recipients of His special love, one must enter into a relationship with Him. It is as if God's love is waiting for us to embrace it. However, we have closed the door and put up the shutters. We have kept the door shut by denying, ignoring and rejecting God. If God were to force His special love on us, love would lose all meaning. We have the choice: to follow the right path and thereby gain God's special love, or reject His guidance and face the spiritual consequences.

The most loving Being wants to love you, but in order for you to embrace that love, and for it to be meaningful, you have to choose to love Him and follow the path that leads to His love. This path is the Prophetic path of the Prophet Muhammad.

“Say, [O Muhammad]: ‘If you love God, then follow me, [so] God will love you and forgive your sins. And God is Forgiving and Merciful.’”

6 Worship is part of who we are

God is worthy of our worship because worship is part of who we are. Just like our need to eat, drink and breathe, worship is an innate tendency. From this perspective, we are natural-born worshippers, because that is who we are and it is our Divinely given purpose. Worshipping God is a logical necessity, just as when we say a car is red. It is red because we have defined that colour as red; it is red by definition. Likewise, we are worshippers by definition, because God defined and made us that way: “I did not create the Jinn [spirit world], nor mankind, except to worship Me.”

Even people who do not believe in God, including those who reject the fact that He is entitled to worship, manifest signs of adoration, reverence and devotion. If you do not worship God, you’ll still end up worshipping something. From an Islamic perspective, the object that you love and revere the most, including whatever you attribute ultimate power to and believe you are ultimately dependent on, is essentially your object of worship. For many people, this can include an ideology, a leader, a family member, and even your own self. In other words, many people idolise these things. Polytheism or idolatry is not just about praying to or bowing down in front of an object.

God is rooted in our innermost nature, and when God commands us to worship Him it is actually a mercy and act of love. It is as if every human being has a hole in his or her heart. This hole is not physical, it is spiritual, and it needs to be filled to achieve spiritual tranquillity. We attempt to fill this hole with a new job, a holiday, a new house, a new car, a hobby, travel or taking up a popular self-help course. However, every time we fill our hearts with these things, a new hole appears. We are never truly satisfied, and after a while we seek something else to fill the spiritual void. Yet, once we fill our hearts with the love of God, the hole remains permanently closed. Thus, we feel at peace and experience a tranquillity that can never be put into words, and a serenity that is undisturbed by calamity.

7 Obeying God is the most rational thing to do

“[And obey God and the Prophet so that you may be given mercy.]”

When I travel by plane, I usually hear the pilot announce—via the inflight audio system—to fasten our seat belts due to oncoming turbulence. My typical response involves sitting down, fastening my belt and hoping (and praying) for the best. The reason I obey the pilot’s command is that I understand he is the authority concerning the plane, how it works and the effects of turbulence. My obedience is a result of using my rational faculties. Only an arrogant person would disobey a valid authority. Would any of us take seriously a seven-year-old telling us that our maths professor does not know how to teach calculus?

In a similar light, disobeying God is foolish and unfounded. Obeying God, even if we do not know the full wisdom behind some of His commands, is the most rational thing to do. God’s commands are based on His boundless knowledge and wisdom. He is the ultimate authority. To deny this authority is like a two-year-old child scribbling on a piece of paper and claiming that he is more eloquent than Shakespeare. (Actually, it is worse.)

This does not mean that we suspend our minds when obeying God. We are told by God Himself to use our reason. However, once we have established what God has said, then that should result in obedience.

Obeying God entails that one should fear Him. A believer should fear God if he wants to be in a state of servitude and obedience. This fear, however, is not the type of fear that is associated with being scared of an enemy or an

evil force. God wants good for us. Rather, this fear is associated with skin-shivering awe, loss, love and unhappiness. We fear God from the perspective of fearing losing His love and good pleasure.

The reasons I have provided above may raise some questions. These include: Does God need our worship? Why did He create us to worship Him? To summarise, God is independent and everything depends on Him. He does not need anything. Worshipping God is for us, not for Him. Also, God creating us to worship Him was inevitable. His perfect names and attributes were going to manifest themselves. An artist inevitably produces art work because he has the attribute of being artistic. By greater reason, God would inevitably create us to worship Him because He is the One worthy of worship. This inevitability is not based on need but rather a manifestation of God's names and attributes.

A Note on the Essence of Worship

In the Islamic tradition, a key act of worship is supplication (known as *dua* in Islamic theology). The Prophet Muhammad taught that supplication is "the essence of worship" [33]. Supplications are to God alone, because only He can help us when we ask for help for something that we need or want. Supplicating to anything other than God is an act of polytheism, because the person is asking for something from an entity that does not have the ability to provide or fulfil that request. For example, if someone were to ask a stone idol to grant them twin girls, it would be an act of polytheism because they are supplicating to an entity that has no power to fulfil that request. This does not mean, however, that asking someone who has the ability to assist you for help is polytheism. It would only be polytheism if one were to believe that God was not the ultimate creator of their ability to help you. Supplicating to God is part of making our worship pure, and the way we supplicate to Him should be with humility. God says: "Invoke your Lord with humility" and "So invoke God making your worship pure for Him".

The free slave

From an existential perspective, worshipping God is true liberation. If worship entails loving and obeying God the most, then in reality many of us also have other gods in our lives. Many of us want to love and obey our own egos and desires the most. We think we are always right, we never want to be wrong, and we always want to impose ourselves on others. From this perspective, we are enslaved to ourselves. The Qur'an points out such a debased spiritual state and describes the one who considers his desires, passions and whims as his god, to be worse than an animal: "Think of the man who has taken his own passion as a god: are you to be his guardian? Do you think that most of them hear or understand? They are just like cattle—no, they are further from the path."

From self-worship, sometimes we move to worship various forms of social pressures, ideas, norms and cultures. They become our point of reference, we start to love them, want to know more about them, and are led to 'obey' them. Examples abound; take, for instance, materialism. We have become preoccupied with money and material belongings. Obviously, to want money and possessions is not necessarily a bad thing, but we have allowed our pursuit to define who we are. Our time and efforts are devoted to the accumulation of wealth, making the false notion of material success the primary focus in our lives. From this perspective, material things start to control us, and lead us to serve the culture of avid materialism rather than serving God. I appreciate that this does not apply to everyone, but this form of excessive materialism is very common.

Essentially, if we are not worshipping God, we are still worshipping something else. This can be our own egos and desires, or ephemeral things like material possessions. In the Islamic tradition, worshipping God defines who we are, as it is part of our nature. If we forget God, and start to worship things that are not worthy of worship, we will slowly forget our own selves: "And be not like those who forgot God, so He made them forget themselves."

Our understanding of who we are is dependent on our relationship with God, which is shaped by our servitude and worship. In this sense, when we worship God we are freed from submission to other 'gods', whether ourselves or things that we own or desire.

The Qur'an presents us with a profound analogy: "God puts forward this illustration: can a man who has for his masters several partners at odds with each other be considered equal to a man devoted wholly to one master? All praise belongs to God, though most of them do not know."

God is essentially telling us that if we do not worship God, we end up worshipping something else. These things enslave us and they become our masters. The Qur'anic analogy is teaching us that without God, we have many 'masters' and they all want something from us. They are all 'at odds with each other', and we end up in a state of misery, confusion and unhappiness. However, God, who knows everything, including our own selves, and who has more mercy than anyone else, is telling us that He is our master, and that only by worshipping Him alone will we truly free ourselves from the shackles of the things we have taken as replacements for Him.

To conclude this essay, lovingly worshipping God and peacefully submitting to Him frees you from the degraded worship of the ephemeral world and the lustful submission to the carnal and egotistical realities of the human condition. The following lines of poetry by the Poet of the East, Muhammad Iqbal, eloquently summarises this point:

"This one prostration which you deem too exacting liberates you from a thousand prostrations."

TRANSCENDING BELIEF

Belief

In philosophy a belief is something we regard as true or likely to be true. It is something that we consider to be a representation of an actual state of affairs. Beliefs do not necessarily require justification or evidence. Beliefs can be about meaningless things, like the fact that you're wearing shoes or that your plate is in the kitchen. Some philosophers regard beliefs as having propositional attitudes. Which can be as mundane as "I have 3 pens in my pocket".

Islam is a form of knowing that transforms one's state of being; it effect what's in their heart, what they say and how the act in the world—how they relate with themselves and others.

To be is to be related

Islam affects our relations to other beings and things. A belief doesn't necessarily change your state of being. For example, you may believe that good foods include: grains, vegetables and fruit. However what you ate last week will probably not be related to your belief about good foods (because you ate fried chicken, chocolate, sweets etc). We can conclude that your beliefs do not necessarily effect your state of being (how you relate to the world).

You may argue that adherents of Islam do not necessarily relate to the world as people who submit to God. Many Muslims err, sin and make mistakes. This is true. However a Muslim will have a state of being that can be described as a necessary level of humility before God with an intention to worship Him. If one is arrogant (to an excessive level) and never intends to worship God, then it will be very difficult to describe that person as a Muslim.

Islam necessarily transforms your state of being to the level of humility before God and with the heartfelt intention to worship Him (the degree of which can change). However, beliefs do not necessarily transform your state of being. They may do nothing to your heart, what they say and how you relate to the world.

Saying that there's no deity worthy of worship except God (Allah) and the Prophet Muhammad (peace & blessings be upon him) is His final Messenger is a form of knowing that transforms one's state of being: what they feel in their heart, what they say with their tongue and how the act and relate to themselves and the world.

COMPARATIVE STUDY ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN ACCORDING TO THE JUDEO-CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES AND THE HOLY QUR'AN

In the West, Islam is believed to be the symbol of the subordination of women par excellence. In order to understand how firm this belief is, it is enough to mention that the Minister of Education in France, the land of Voltaire, had ordered the expulsion of all young Muslim women wearing the veil from French schools! A young Muslim student wearing a headscarf is denied her right of education in France, while a Catholic student wearing a cross or a Jewish student wearing a skullcap is not. The scene of French policemen preventing young Muslim women wearing headscarves from entering their high school is unforgettable. It inspires the memories of another equally disgraceful scene of Governor George Wallace of Alabama in 1962 standing in front of a school gate trying to block the entrance of black students in order to prevent the desegregation of Alabama's schools. The difference between the two scenes is that the black students had the sympathy of so many people in the U.S. and in the whole world. President Kennedy sent the U.S. National Guard to force the entry of the black students. The Muslim girls, on the other hand, received no help from anyone. Their cause seems to have very little sympathy either inside or outside France. The reason is the widespread misunderstanding and fear of anything Islamic in the world today. What intrigues the most is this question. Do Judaism, Christianity, and Islam have the same conception of women?? Are they different in their conceptions?? Do Judaism and Christianity, truly, offer women a better treatment than Islam does?? What is the Truth??

It is not easy to search for and find answers to these difficult questions. The first difficulty is that one has to be fair and objective or, at least, do one's utmost to be so. This is what Islam teaches. The Qur'an has instructed Muslims to say the truth even if those who are very close to them do not like it:

"Whenever you speak, speak justly, even if a near relative is concerned" (6:152)

"O you who believe stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor" (4:135).

My goal from this book is only to vindicate Islam and pay a tribute, long overdue in the West, to the final truthful Message from Allah to the human race. my concern in this article, mainly, the position of women in the three religions as it appears in their original sources not as practised by their millions of followers in the world today. Therefore, most of the evidence cited comes from the Qur'an Kareem, the sayings of Prophet Mohammed, the Bible, the Talmud, and the sayings of some of the most influential Church Fathers whose views have contributed immeasurably to defining and shaping Christianity. This interest in the sources relates to the fact that understanding a certain religion from the attitudes and the behaviour of some of its nominal followers is misleading. Many people confuse culture with religion, many others do not know what their religious books are saying, and many others do not even care.

EATING FROM THE TREE OF Paradise. WAS IT JUST HAWWA's (Biblical Eve) FAULT??

The three religions agree on one basic fact: Both women and men are created by Allah (God), The Creator of the whole universe. However, disagreement starts soon after the creation of the first man, Adam (alaihissalaam), and the first woman, Eve (Ammi Hawwa radhiyallahu anha). The Judaeo-Christian conception of the creation of Adam (alaihissalaam) and Eve (Hawwa radhiyallahu anha) is narrated in detail in Genesis 2:4-3:24. God prohibited both of them from eating the fruits of the forbidden tree. The serpent seduced Eve (Hawwa radhiyallahu anha) to eat from it and Eve (Hawwa radhiyallahu anha), in turn, seduced Adam (alaihissalaam) to eat with her. When God rebuked Adam for what he did, he put all the blame on Eve, "The woman you put here with me –she gave me some fruit from the tree and I ate it." Consequently, God said to Eve: "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you." To Adam He

said: "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life..."

The Islamic conception of the first creation is found in several places in the Quran, for example:

"O Adam (alaihissalaam) dwell with your wife in the Garden and enjoy as you wish but approach not this tree or you run into harm and transgression. Then Satan whispered to them in order to reveal to them their shame that was hidden from them and he said: 'Your Lord only forbade you this tree lest you become angels or such beings as live forever.' And he swore to them both that he was their sincere adviser. So by deceit he brought them to their fall: when they tasted the tree their shame became manifest to them and they began to sew together the leaves of the Garden over their bodies. And their Lord called unto them: 'Did I not forbid you that tree and tell you that Satan was your avowed enemy?' They said: 'Our Lord we have wronged our own souls and if You forgive us not and bestow not upon us Your Mercy, we shall certainly be lost' "(7:19:23).

A careful look into the two accounts of the story of the Creation reveals some essential differences. The Qur'an, contrary to the Bible, places equal blame on both Adam (alaihissalaam) and Eve (Hawwa radhiyallahu anha) for their mistake. Nowhere in the Qur'an can one find even the slightest hint that Eve (Hawwa radhiyallahu anha) tempted Adam (alaihissalaam) to eat from the tree or even that she had eaten before him. Eve in the Qur'an is no temptress, no seducer, and no deceiver.

Moreover, Eve (Hawwa radhiyallahu anha) is not to be blamed for the pains of childbearing. Allah, according to the Qur'an, punishes no one for another's faults. Both Adam (alaihissalaam) and Eve (Hawwa radhiyallahu anha) committed a sin and then asked Allah for forgiveness and He forgave them both.

The image of Eve (Hawwa radhiyallahu anha) as temptress in the Bible has resulted in an extremely negative impact on women throughout the Judaeo-Christian tradition. All women were believed to have inherited from their mother, the Biblical Eve, both her guilt and her guile. Consequently, they were all untrustworthy, morally inferior, and wicked. Menstruation, pregnancy, and childbearing were considered the just punishment for the eternal guilt of the cursed female sex. In order to appreciate how negative the impact of the Biblical Eve was on all her female descendants we have to look at the writings of some of the most important Jews and Christians of all time.

Let us start with the Old Testament and look at excerpts from what is called the Wisdom Literature in which we find: "I find more bitter than death the woman who is a snare, whose heart is a trap and whose hands are chains. The man who pleases God will escape her, but the sinner she will ensnare....while I was still searching but not finding, I found one upright man among a thousand but not one upright woman among them all" (Ecclesiastes 7:26-28).

In another part of the Hebrew literature which is found in the Catholic Bible we read: "No wickedness comes anywhere near the wickedness of a woman.....Sin began with a woman and thanks to her we all must die" (Ecclesiasticus 25:19, 24).

Jewish Rabbis listed nine curses inflicted on women as a result of the Fall: "To the woman He gave nine curses and death: the burden of the blood of menstruation and the blood of virginity; the burden of pregnancy; the burden of childbirth; the burden of bringing up the children; her head is covered as one in mourning; she pierces her ear like a permanent slave or slave girl who serves her master; she is not to be believed as a witness; and after everything—death."

2. To the present day, orthodox Jewish men in their daily morning prayer recite "Blessed be God King of the universe that Thou has not made me a woman." The women, on the other hand, thank God every morning for "making me according to Thy will."

3 Another prayer found in many Jewish prayer books: "Praised be God that he has not created me a gentile. Praised be God that he has not created me a woman. Praised be God that he has not created me an ignoramus."

The Biblical Eve has played a far bigger role in Christianity than in Judaism. Her sin has been pivotal to the whole Christian faith because the Christian conception of the reason for the mission of Jesus (Qur'anic 'Eesa alaihissalaam) on Earth stems from Eve's disobedience to God. She had sinned and then seduced Adam to follow her suit. Consequently, God expelled both of them from Heaven to Earth, which had been cursed because of them.

They bequeathed their sin, which had not been forgiven by God, to all their descendants and, thus, all humans are born in sin. In order to purify human beings from their 'original sin', God had to sacrifice Jesus, who is considered to be the Son of God, on the cross. Therefore, Eve is responsible for her own mistake, her husband's sin, the original sin of all humanity, and the death of the Son of God. In other words, one woman acting on her own caused the fall of humanity!

5 What about her daughters?? They are sinners like her and have to be treated as such. Listen to the severe tone of Paul in the New Testament: "A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I don't permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner" (I Timothy 2:11-14).

Tertullian was even more blunt than Paul, while he was talking to his 'best beloved sisters' in the faith, he said: "Do you not know that you are each an Eve? The sentence of God on this sex of yours lives in this age: the guilt must of necessity live too. You are the Devil's gateway: You are the unsealer of the forbidden tree: You are the first deserter of the divine law: You are she who persuaded him whom the devil was not valiant enough to attack. You destroyed so easily God's image, man. On account of your desert even the Son of God had to die."

Augustine was faithful to the legacy of his predecessors, he wrote to a friend: "What is the difference whether it is in a wife or a mother, it is still Eve the temptress that we must beware of in any woman.....I fail to see what use woman can be to man, if one excludes the function of bearing children."

Centuries later, Thomas Aquinas still considered women as defective: "As regards the individual nature, woman is defective and misbegotten, for the active force in the male seed tends to the production of a perfect likeness in the masculine sex; while the production of woman comes from a defect in the active force or from some material indisposition, or even from some external influence."

Finally, the renowned reformer Martin Luther could not see any benefit from a woman but bringing into the world as many children as possible regardless of any side effects: "If they become tired or even die, that does not matter. Let them die in childbirth, that's why they are there"

Again and again all women are denigrated because of the image of Eve the temptress, thanks to the Biblical Genesis account.

To sum up, the Judaeo-Christian conception of women has been poisoned by the belief in the sinful nature of Eve and her female offspring.

If we now turn our attention to what the Noble Qur'an has to say about women, we will soon realize that the Islamic conception of women is radically different from the Judaeo-Christian one. Let the Qur'an the Word of Allah Ta'ala speak for itself:

"For Muslim men and women, for believing men and women, for devout men and women, for true men and women, for men and women who are patient, for men and women who humble themselves, for men and women who give in charity, for men and women who fast, for men and women who guard their chastity, and for men and women who engage much in Allah's praise— For them all has Allah prepared forgiveness and great reward" (33:35).

"The believers, men and women, are protectors, one of another: they enjoin what is just, and forbid what is evil, they observe regular prayers, practise regular charity, and obey Allah and His Messenger. On them will Allah pour His Mercy: for Allah is Exalted in power, Wise" (9:71).

"And their Lord answered them: Truly I will never cause to be lost the work of any of you, Be you a male or female, you are members one of another" (3:195).

"Whoever works evil will not be requited but by the like thereof, and whoever works a righteous deed -whether man or woman- and is a believer- such will enter the Garden of bliss" (40:40).

"Whoever works righteousness, man or woman, and has faith, verily to him/her we will give a new life that is good and pure, and we will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their actions" (16:97).

It is clear that the Qur'anic view of women is no different than that of men. They, both, are Allah's creatures whose sublime goal on earth is to worship their Lord, do righteous deeds, and avoid evil and they, both, will be assessed accordingly. The Qur'an never mentions that the woman is the devil's gateway or that she is a deceiver by nature. The Qur'an, also, never mentions that man is God's image; all men and all women are his creatures, that is all. According to the Qur'an, a woman's role on earth is not limited only to childbirth. She is required to do as many good deeds as any other man is required to do. The Qur'an never says that no upright women have ever existed. To the contrary, the Qur'an has instructed all the believers, women as well as men, to follow the example of those ideal women such as the Virgin Mary and the Pharaoh's wife:

"And Allah sets forth, As an example to those who believe, the wife of Pharaoh: Behold she said: 'O my lord build for me, in nearness to you, a mansion in the Garden, and save me from Pharaoh and his doings and save me from those who do wrong.'

And Mary the daughter of Imran who guarded her chastity and We breathed into her body of Our spirit; and she testified to the truth of the words of her Lord and of His revelations and was one of the devout" (66:11-13).

ISLAM AND THE EMANCIPATION OF THE MUSLIM WOMEN

NO Muslim country is today free and uncontaminated with a fierce propaganda campaign against Purdah as "reactionary obscurantism" and insisting upon female "emancipation" as the essential for the economic and social development of our community. If we claim to be Muslims, is it not our duty to know what our faith teaches us on this subject?

Regarding the notion of female "equality," verse 34 in Surah an-Nisa tells us that men are in charge of women because God has made the former to excel the latter and because they spend their property for the support of women. This means that no Muslim woman should be obliged to earn her livelihood unless she possesses no property, has lost her husband through divorce or death and has no other male relative to provide for her. The Holy Qur'an teaches us that the husband is both master and friend to his wife; his duty is to treat her with justice, love and kindness and in turn the wife must be loyal and obedient. Our Holy Qur'an describes the husband as a degree above the wife not to make him a cruel tyrant but for the preservation of the family. In families where the wife is economically independent, the husband automatically loses his role as head of the household. Consequently, when the mother dominates, the children lose all respect for the father.

Surah an-Nur, verse 30--31, forbid Muslim men to look at strange women or Muslim women at strange men and commands men and women alike to cast their gaze down. Women must wear head-veils and draw them over their bosoms and not display their beauty to anyone except their husbands and close family relations within the prohibited degrees of marriage. This verse by implication bans painting the face with cosmetics or any kind of dress designed for sex appeal. The Hadith tells us that when Asma, the sister of Ayesha, once appeared wearing transparent clothes, the Holy Prophet rebuked her saying that once a woman reaches puberty, nothing of her should be exposed except her face, hands and feet.

In Surah al-Ahzab, verse 55, God admonishes the wives of the Holy Prophet to stay in their homes and forbade Muslim women to go out for pleasure adorned in finery and dress or behave in public in any manner that attracts attention to themselves. They can converse freely only with close family relations within the prohibited degrees of marriage, their husbands, their servants and their slaves. Verse 53 of this same Surah orders the believers to show due respect for the wives of the Prophet by requesting of them from behind a curtain. Verse 59 says that when Muslim women find it necessary to go out, they should wear an outer-garment enveloping the entire body so that they may be recognised as virtuous believers and not be annoyed.

The Hadith forbid Muslim women to be alone with any man not her husband or within the prohibited degrees of marriage, to live alone apart from her family or to undertake any long journey without escort by her close male relations. If the most authentic Hadith strongly discourage women from participating even in the public congregational prayers in the mosque and urge them to perform their prayers in the privacy of their own rooms as most pleasing in the sight of God, how on earth then, can a Muslim tolerate women as secretaries, bank clerks, air hostesses, waitresses in restaurants, models singers, dancers and actresses over the radio, television and in films?

Surah an-Nur (verses 1-24) threatens the most severe penalties in this world and the Hereafter to those who indulge in any sexual relations outside of marriage. What then could be more irrefutable evidence of Islam's support of Purdah than this testimony from the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah? The restrictions Islamic injunctions place upon the movements of Muslim women are intended solely for their own benefit to prevent men from taking unfair advantage. Islam not only condemns immorality but also forbids the believers to follow any of the ways leading to it!

The first champions of the movement for women's "emancipation" were none else than Marx and Engels — the founders of Com-munism who preached in their COMMUNIST MANI-FESTO (1848) that marriage, home and family were nothing but a curse which kept women in perpetual slavery. Therefore they insisted that the women must be "liberated" from domestic servitude and achieve full economic independence through full-time employment in industry. The subsequent champions of feminism insisted that women must be granted as much freedom to indulge in illicit sex as the men through co-education, employment alongside men, mixed social functions and courtship before marriage in semi-nude fashions with contraceptives, sterilization and abortion to prevent unwanted pregnancies and state-controlled nurseries and public boarding schools assuming the responsibility for the rearing of the children, many of whom would be illegitimate. This is in essence what the modern concept of "women's rights" amounts to!

The propaganda campaign for women's "emancipation" waged by the press, radio, television and cinema, belittles the role of woman as wife and mother and describes those who spend their time maintaining their homes and raising their children as an unpardonable waste of energy and an economic loss of half the nation's manpower. These champions of feminism are insisting that every girl be prepared in school and college to compete with men for jobs in offices and factories. Yet at the same time, they assert that the emancipated woman's primary duty is still her home! In other words, this means that the modern woman must bear a double burden; in addition to earning her own living in full- time employment outside the home, she must at the same time somehow perform the near-impossible task of fulfilling all her obligations to her husband and children and keep house single-handed! Is this justice?

Have the new family laws enacted in most Muslim countries to conform with the legal codes of the West, really improved the position of our women? This legislation is very careful indeed to specify a minimum age for marriage but forgets to place any similar restrictions upon illicit affairs between young girls and boys who are prohibited to marry. In most Muslim countries, in contradiction to the whole spirit of Qur'an and Sunnah, polygamy is being more and more restricted and even forbidden by our modernists — who have never posed the question whether it is better for a woman to share her husband's love with another woman who is also his legitimate wife and maintain her right to remain under the protection of his roof, receive his support and her children have the love and care of a father, or would she rather see her husband forced into clandestine illicit affairs because the law of the land

prohibits him from marrying again until he divorces her first and throws her and her children out? Is it not far better for the woman who is not getting on well with her husband to be divorced by him in private so that the unhappy couple can part in peace, each free to marry again, or should the case be decided by a Court and the husband, to be rid of the marriage tie, be compelled to falsely charge his wife with immoral conduct in order to convince the third party of the "necessity" for the divorce, resulting in public scandal and the poor woman's reputation ruined for life?

Actually, the champions of female 'emancipation' are not at all interested in the personal happiness and welfare of the women concerned. This movement should be recognized by all Muslims for what it is — a malignant conspiracy to destroy the home and family and eventually wreck our entire society. The cheap slogans of "women's rights," "emancipation" and "progress" only serve as a smoke screen to obscure its real intentions. Once the woman leaves the home, there is no home and the movement for female emancipation here cannot but lead to the same catastrophe which has already happened elsewhere — universal indulgence in illicit contacts with the sexual behaviour of the humans involved so degraded as would shock the wild beasts in the jungle, and as an inevitable result of the destruction of the home and family and indeed the whole moral framework of our community, an epidemic of juvenile delinquency, crime and an atmosphere saturated with violence, unrest and lawlessness in general. The history of the civilizations of the past is sufficient proof that when vice and immorality run rampant, no society can long survive.

THE KORAN:

In interpreting the primary sources of Islam, a number of essential and universal rules must be observed. They include the following:

- The realization that the Qur'an has been preserved in the original language in which it was revealed (Arabic). In the process of translation into other languages, nuances of the original language may be lost or not fully communicated. Outright mistakes in translation do occur. Therefore, deep knowledge of the Arabic language is a must for any scholarly interpretation. It should be noted that certain terms used in the Qur'an carry differing meanings depending upon the context. For example, the term Ahl Al-Kitab or "People of the Book" is sometimes used to refer to Jews, other times to Christians, and in other instances to both. Likewise, the term al-nas is used sometimes to refer to all humankind, when the context deals with Allah as the Creator of humankind as in Surat An-Nisaa' 4:1, Al-Hujurat 49:13, and An-Nas 114:1-6. In Aal 'Imran 3:173, however, when the same term al-nas is used, it obviously refers to a subset of humankind, not all. The same applies to terms like Jews or Christians. Such terms may refer only to some but not all Jews or Christians.
- The Qur'an explains itself. Since the Qur'an is not ordered by topic (like textbook chapters), it is necessary for a scholar to be thoroughly familiar with other texts in the Qur'an which deal with the same topic or relate directly to it. Failure to do so may lead to selectivity, which may distort the overall message of the Qur'an concerning that topic. In fact, other texts in the Qur'an may be highly significant in determining the true meaning of a given text.

- In addition to the overall Qur'anic context, consideration should be given to the section in which a particular verse occurs. One of the most common serious mistakes is to quote only a part of a verse or one verse in an interrelated section of a surah (chapter) in such a way as to change its meaning.
- Consideration of the occasion of revelation (asbab al-nuzul) of certain verses, if known and authentic, affects the interpretation of that verse.
- If there is an authentic hadith dealing with the same topic as the Qur'anic verse, the hadith takes precedence over mere opinion or speculation.
- Keep in mind that some Qur'anic verses were revealed to deal with certain historical challenges facing the emerging and besieged Muslim community affects interpretation. Some of these challenges may not be present today, and if they are, they may take a different form. Some verses revealed to deal with such situations should not be unnecessarily generalized. For example, referring to verse 5 in surah 9 without any regard to its historical context may give the misleading impression that the Qur'an condones the killing of all idolatrous people, rather than only those who committed or conspired with others to commit murder in violation of their treaties. A fuller explanation of this verse is discussed later in this paper.
- The few texts must be interpreted in the light of the many texts. For example, the Qur'an repeatedly affirms the freedom of conscience and rejects compulsion in religion. However, we encounter some verses in the Qur'an which allow fighting non-Muslims. To understand these later verses as permitting fighting against others because of their rejection of Islam or in order to force or coerce them to accept Islam is to disregard many Qur'anic texts that are inconsistent with that interpretation. The question then, is whether the permission to fight is because of their faith choice or because of their aggression and/or oppression, with religious choice being incidental, not the cause of fighting.
- Even an authoritative and authentic text of the primary sources of Islam may have more than one possible meaning (mutashabih) and must be interpreted in the light of the more definitive text (muhkam), not the reverse.

Any claim of naskh (abrogation, or more correctly supercession) must be carefully examined. The entire Qur'an is definitively authentic (qat'i al-thubut). Any claim of naskh must be definitive, not based on mere opinion or speculation. It should be noted that earlier Muslims used the term naskh to refer also to takhsees or specifying and limiting the ruling than abrogating it.

This issue is of paramount importance, since the Muslim heritage includes writings that went into unreasonable excesses in their claims of naskh. While a few scholars claimed that hundreds of verses were abrogated, the great majority of scholars rejected these unsubstantiated claims. For example, Jalal Al-Din Al-Suyuti narrowed down the number of "abrogated" verses to 19. Other scholars, like Shah Waliyullah Al-Dahlawi and Sobhi Al-Saleh, even narrowed them down to smaller numbers. The fact that there are legitimate disagreements about the number of abrogated verses in the Qur'an is itself an indication that some if not most of these claims are far from definitive, if not mistaken, based on strong evidence.

Guided by the above methodology, we move next to review the Qur'anic values and precepts, which represent the underpinning of Muslim/Non-Muslim relationships.

Qur'anic Foundations of Muslim/Non-Muslim Relations

It should be noted from the beginning that the very term Islam implies that peace is the basis and the norm of Muslim/non-Muslim relations. Islam is derived from the Arabic root S-L-M, whose generic meaning includes the concepts of peace and submission. From a spiritual perspective, Islam may be defined as attaining peace through submission to Allah or the state of peace in submission to Allah. Ample references in the Qur'an and Hadith reveal

that this concept of peace embraces peace with God, inner peace as a result of that relationship with God, peace with humans, peace with the animal world, peace with vegetation, and peace with the ecological order.

For Muslims, this “generic Islam” has been the core of all prophetic teachings throughout human history. Key theological and eschatological Qur’anic terms are derived from the same Arabic root, S-L-M. One of God’s names or attributes is As-Salam, meaning “the peace” or “the source of peace.” Paradise is called the home or abode of peace. As they enter Paradise, angels greet believers with the greeting “peace be with you,” the same greeting that will be exchanged between the dwellers of Paradise. It is also the standard greeting among Muslims worldwide. Peace also lies at the heart of the universally accepted five major objectives (maqasid) of Shari’ah (Islamic jurisprudence), to safeguard faith, life, mind, honor and property. Peaceful relationships among human beings include various circles such as family, community, society, and humanity at large. It includes relationships with fellow believers in Islam and with humanity at large. The focus of this section, however, is on the universal concepts and values underlying the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims. They include the following:

- Faith in the One Universal God (Allah in Arabic): Islam is founded on the belief that there is only one God (Allah in Arabic), Who is the universal Creator, Sustainer, and Cherisher of all. Being the sole creator of all humankind precludes any notion of multiple, competing creators, each marshalling his creation against the other “gods” and their creation. Allah is One and is impartial toward His creation. He provides for all, including those who reject faith in Him or even those who defy Him. He cares for the well-being of all and gives them ample opportunity to repent to Him and end the state of separateness suffered by those who reject Him or are unmindful of Him. This belief implies that all humans are equal before Allah in terms of their humanity, irrespective of their particular beliefs. Only Allah is the ultimate judge of any person’s “theological correctness.” No human should be oppressed or mistreated by other fellow humans because of a perceived “theological incorrectness.”
- Unity and universality of the core teachings of all prophets: That core message is peace in submission to Allah, literally Islam. According to the Qur’an, a Muslim must accept, revere, and believe in all the prophets of Allah, without discrimination. They all represent one brotherhood of faith extending vertically to include many generations and horizontally to embrace all humanity. In the Qur’an we read [we (Muslims) make no distinction between any of His messengers (God’s messengers)] (Al-Baqarah 2:285). We read also [Behold, We have revealed to you (O Muhammad) as We revealed to Noah and all the prophets after him] (Al-Nisa’ 4:163). Still in another verse we read [In matters of faith, He (God) has ordained for you that which He had enjoined upon Abraham, Moses, and Jesus: steadfastly uphold the (true) faith and make no divisions therein] (Ash-Shura 42:13). These Qur’anic texts preclude the notion of narrow partisanship that may lead to hatred or even violence against communities who perceive themselves as followers of other prophets.
- Universal human dignity: The Qur’an gives various reasons why each human being must be honoured and dignified on account of being human and irrespective of his or her chosen beliefs. Such honor is symbolized by the way the Qur’an describes Allah’s creation of the human in the best of moulds and commanding the angels to bow down in respect to Adam.

The Qur’an describes the human as the trustee of Allah on earth. Allah created everything on earth and in the heavens for the benefit of the human race. Sanctity of human life is affirmed in the Qur’an [Nor take life, which God has made sacred, except for just cause] (Al-Israa’ 17:33). The Qur’an confirms God’s revelation to previous prophets that [If anyone slays a human being, unless it be (punishment) for murder, or for spreading mischief on earth, it shall be as though he had slain all humankind; whereas, if anyone saves a life, it shall be as though he had saved the lives of all humankind] (Al-Ma’idah 5:32). Beyond sanctity of life, in the Qur’an we read [Indeed, We (God) have conferred dignity on the children of Adam] (Al-Israa’ 17:70). It is noted that this verse is inclusive of all humans, irrespective of their religion or even their belief in God.

Rejection of belief in God will surely have consequences in the afterlife. However, it is up to God to determine these consequences. Such future determination has no bearing on the respect of the humanity of every person in this

life. After all, the human is a free agent, and as such, each is individually responsible before God for his or her beliefs and moral choices. A person can be held accountable in this life only if such a moral choice infringes on the rights of individuals or society, such as the commission of crimes or acts of aggression. In other words, no human is entitled to dehumanize or punish another on the sole ground that the latter is following a different religion or no religion at all. This value implies that peaceful co-existence among followers of all religions and respecting their humanity is not only possible, but also mandated in the Qur'an.

Universal justice: The Arabic term for justice is *adl*, meaning "to be in a state of equilibrium, to be balanced." That balance is inherent in the cosmic order and ecology as much as it is inherent in spiritual and ethical values. The Qur'an warns against disturbing that balance. Within that broad context, we can examine the concept of justice as it relates to human relationships based on Islam's primary sources. Briefly, that concept has the following characteristics:

Justice is not mere "political correctness" or something to be pursued exclusively, for worldly gain. For the believer, it is a divine command.

Justice is at the heart of prophetic teachings.

Justice is a universal concept that should be observed without nepotism, even with the "enemy":

[O you who believe! Stand out for justice, as witnesses to Allah, and even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor.] (An-Nisaa' 4:134)

[O you who believe! Stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to piety and fear Allah, for Allah is well acquainted with all that you do.] (Al-Ma'idah 5:8)

The above concept of universal justice relates to peace in at least two ways:

1. It is inconceivable to secure genuine lasting peace without justice. In fact, doing justice is a prerequisite to peace.
2. To harm, persecute, or fight against any person on account of his or her religious convictions is one of the worst forms of injustice, which is condemned in the primary sources of Islam.

Universal human brotherhood: Addressing the entire human race, the Qur'an states,

[O humankind! We (Allah) have created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female and have made you into nations and tribes, so that you may come to know one another. Verily, the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous (or Allah-conscious) of you. Surely, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.] (Al-Hujurat 49:13)

It must be noted that this verse does not address Muslims exclusively, but begins with the inclusive address "O humankind," an address that embraces all. It reminds humanity that they belong to one family with the same set of parents, albeit a diverse family. This is a reminder that diversity in unity and unity within diversity are possible. Humanity is like a bouquet of flowers in which each flower is beautiful in its own right, yet, the combination of all flowers and the rich diversity of their colours is more beautiful. This sweeping statement in the Qur'an about broad human brotherhood is a profound basis for peace for and among all.

Acceptance of plurality in human societies: While the notion of plurality may appear to be a relatively new concept, it is not new to those who are familiar with the Qur'an. The Qur'an is quite explicit in reminding all that if God willed, He would have made of all mankind one nation (Al-Ma'idah 5:48; Hud 11:118). Likewise, the Qur'an states that had it been God's will, He would have made all people believers (Yunus 10:99).

This means that forcing people to believe in God runs against His decree of free will, which includes the fact that some will reject Him. The ultimate reward or punishment for accepting or rejecting belief in God is deferred until

the Day of Judgment. This value inculcates the attitude of being non-judgmental and accepting of people as they are, human beings entitled to choose and who are answerable to their Creator. Acceptance of plurality does not mean accepting the plurality of ultimate truths, nor does it preclude sharing one's faith with others and even inviting them to it. Plurality means peaceful coexistence with those who hold differing beliefs and convictions.

Prohibition of compulsion in faith: Sharing or propagating faith is not the same as compulsion in religion. The Qur'an makes it a duty on believers to communicate the message of Islam to fellow humans and to be witnesses to humankind.

[And thus We (Allah) made of you (O Muslims) a justly balanced community that you might bear witness (to the truth) to humankind and the Apostle might bear witness over you.] (Al-Baqarah 2:143)

Being witnesses for Allah includes both witnessing through righteous deeds and sharing what one believes is the truth, which is beneficial to humankind. Some communities use the term conversion to designate that later form of witnessing. The Qur'anic term for such sharing is *da'wah*, which means, literally, "invitation." The term itself means that the invitee has every right to accept or reject that "invitation." Compulsion, threats, bribery, deception, manipulation, and exploitation of the invitee's vulnerability (such as hunger or illness) are inconsistent with the notion of "invitation."

The Qur'an gives guidance on how to invite others to Islam. Invitation should be with wisdom and in the most gracious way.

[Invite (all humankind) to the path of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation and argue with them in the most kindly manner, for, indeed, your Lord knows best as to who strays from His path, and best who are the right-guided.] (An-Nahl 16:125)

In numerous verses in the Qur'an, compulsion in religion is forbidden:

[There shall be no coercion in matters of faith.] (Al-Baqarah 2:256)

[And so (O Prophet), exhort them; your task is only to exhort. You cannot compel them (to believe). As for one who turns away, being bent on denying the truth, him or her will God cause the greatest suffering (in the life to come). For verily, unto Us will be their return, and verily, it is for Us to call them to account.] (Al-Ghashiyah 88:21-26)

[Had your Lord so willed, all those who live on earth would surely have attained faith, will you then compel people, against their will, to believe?] (Yunus 10:99)

The Qur'an does not prescribe any punishment for rejecting the "invitation" to accept Islam.

[But if they turn away (from accepting Allah's message, then know that) We have not sent you to be their keeper. Your duty is only to convey (the message).] (Ash-Shura 42:48)

· Universal mercy: The essence of Islam and its Prophet's mission is summed up in the following verse:

[And (thus, O Muhammad), We have not sent you, but as mercy to all the worlds.] (Al-Anbiyya' 21:107)

To remove any particularization of this mercy, the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) explained that mercy is not being merciful to one's companions but merciful to all. He also explained, "He who is not merciful to others, will not be treated mercifully." It is obvious that Muslims are not the only dwellers of the earth. Hence the command to be merciful applies to all. In fact, mercy applies as well to animals and other creatures of Allah. A logical fruit of this attitude of mercy is to love humankind as persons and fellow honored creatures of Allah, while dissociating oneself from their erroneous beliefs or even rejection of Allah. This love finds its greatest form by loving good and guidance for them. This does not mean loving their wrongdoing or their rejection of faith in Allah. It is the love of their guidance and well being in this life and in the life to come.

- Universal peaceful coexistence: The basic rule governing the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims is that of peaceful coexistence, justice and compassion. The following two verses are key verses that embody that general rule:

[As for such (non-Muslims) who do not fight you on account of (your) faith, or drive you forth from your homelands, God does not forbid you to show them kindness (also love and respect) and to deal with them with equity, for God loves those who act equitably. God only forbids you to turn in friendship towards such as fight against you because of (your) faith and drive you forth from your homelands or aid (others) in driving you forth. As for those from among you who turn towards them for alliance, it is they who are wrongdoers.] (Al-Mumtahanah 60:8-9)

This verse makes it a Muslim's duty to treat peacefully coexisting persons with equity (qist) and birr. The term birr and its derivatives are the same expressions used in the Qur'an and Hadith to refer to one's relationship with his or her parents. Such a relationship is more than kindness, since it includes also love and respect. Many English translations of the Qur'an have translated this Qur'anic term as kindness, a translation that falls short of the richer meaning of the original Arabic term. To ameliorate this problem, the bracketed statement (also love and respect) was added above. The term qist has been translated as "justice." Justice, however, is closest to another Arabic word 'adl. This word, however, refers to giving the other his or her rights, no less and no more. Other scholars argue that the Qur'anic term qist means "going beyond justice by giving more than what is due to others."

- Peaceful dialogue, especially with the People of the Book: All of the above nine principles apply to all non-Muslims. The Qur'an accords the People of the Book (Jews and Christians) a special position. The very term to designate them distinguishes them from others such as idolatrous Arabs (Al-Bayyinah 98:1). It is a complimentary title as it acknowledges that, like Muslims, their faiths are based on revealed books or scriptures. In its family and dietary laws, the Qur'an gives a special consideration to the People of the Book. For example, a Muslim male may marry a believing Jewish or Christian woman (Al-Ma'idah 5:5). The Qur'an exhorts Muslims to engage in peaceful dialogue with Jews and Christians:

[Say (O Muslims), O People of the Book! Come to a common term which we and you hold in common: that we shall worship none but Allah, and that we shall not ascribe divinity to none beside Him, and that we shall not take human beings for our lord beside Allah, and if they turn away, then say: bear witness that we submit ourselves unto Him.] (Aal 'Imran 3:64)

It may be noted that "turning away" from this invitation is not presented as a punishable offense in this life, and that the consequence of rejection is to simply testify Muslims' submission to Allah. Another verse in the Qur'an encourages peaceful dialogue and invites all to build upon the common ground between Muslims and the People of the Book. The Qur'an instructs Muslims:

[And do not argue with the People of Book except in a most kindly manner, except for those of them who are bent on evildoing, and say: "We believe in the revelation which has come down to us and in that which has come down to you; our Lord and yours is One and it is to Him that we (all) submit ourselves."] (Al-'Ankabut 29:46)

Not only do Muslims, Christians, and Jews share belief in the One God and divine revelation, they also share belief in human responsibility, consequences of good and evil deeds, moral teachings, and other values such as love, peace, and justice.

It may be concluded that the ten values and principles above represent a solid foundation for a peaceful relationship and coexistence with all, irrespective of their religious choices. It may be noted, however, that genuine and lasting peace must to be protected and safeguarded against those who try to destroy it. Genuine peace does not necessarily mean the total absence of use of force or even war as a lesser evil and as a last resort. The main question is when and how. This is the focus of the next section of this paper.

Jihad Is Not “Holy War”

The foregoing discussion provides ample evidence that the normative relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims is that of peace, justice, mercy, and mutual respect. Some may ask, however, how building and mainstreaming peace can be reconciled with the concept of “holy war.”

The Qur’anic Arabic term jihad has been commonly mistranslated as “holy war.” The Qur’an was revealed in Arabic, not in English. The Arabic equivalent of the English expression “holy war” is harb muqadasah, an expression that is not found anywhere in the Qur’an or in the authentic sayings of the Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings be upon him). Even when the Qur’an speaks about defensive war, it never glorifies it or calls it “holy”; rather, it is described as something which is inherently hated (Al-Baqarah 2:216-217). However, as a last resort, it may be better than doing nothing in the face of aggression or oppression.

Furthermore, the term holy war means, lexically, a fight on behalf of one religion against the other(s). There is no verse in the Qur’an that condones fighting any peaceful non-Muslim on the sole ground that he or she is a non-Muslim. The Qur’an prohibits compulsion in religion (Al-Baqarah 2:256) and even allows one form of interfaith marriage. For example, a Muslim male may marry a Jewish or Christian woman (Al-Ma’idah 5:5).

It may be argued, from a religious perspective, that the expression holy war is a contradiction in terms, as there is nothing “holy” about war and its results—bloodshed, destruction and human suffering. It may be a lesser evil in some instances, but it may not be holy in itself. It may be useful to discuss the meaning of jihad in both its literal and religious meanings.

Jihad is an Arabic term derived from the root J-H-D, which means, literally, “to strive or exert effort.” It is the same root from which the legal term ijтиhad is derived, as ijтиhad refers to the exertion of intellectual effort by scholars so as to come up with an informed religious opinion on a new issue or problem. The term jihad and similar terms derived from the same root are used in the Qur’an and Hadith.

First, it is used in the context of prayers, doing righteous deeds, and self-purification; inward jihad or struggle against evil inclinations within oneself (Al-Hajj 22:77-78; and Al-‘Ankabut 29:4-7).

Second, it is used in the context of social jihad, or striving for truth, justice, and goodness in one’s relationship with other humans. Examples of this usage include the payment of charity to the needy (Al-Hujurat 49:15) and striving to persuade those who reject God’s message by referring to the arguments presented in the Qur’an (Al-Furqan 25:52).

Third, it is used in the context of the battlefield, which is often called, more specifically, qital, which means “fighting.” That later form, the combative jihad, is allowed in the Qur’an for legitimate self-defense in the face of unprovoked aggression or in resisting severe oppression on religious or other grounds. In fact, the first verses in the Qur’an that allowed self-defense were not revealed until the early Muslim community had endured more than 13 years of suffering and aggression at the hands of the idolatrous Arabs. The wording of these verses is revealing:

[Permission (to fight) is given to those against whom war is being wrongfully waged, and verily, God has indeed the power to aid them. Those who have been driven from their homelands in defiance of right for no other reason than their saying, ‘Our Lord is Allah.’] (Al-Hajj 22:39-40)

THE MEANING OF THE WORD ISLAM

Further evidence that Islam is the true religion is from the meaning of the word ‘Islam’ itself. Basically the word ‘Islam’ is an Arabic word that denotes submission and obedience. As a religion, Islam has two meanings; general

and specific. Islam in general, refers to the religion which God revealed to all prophets: the worship of God alone (Monotheism) and the avoidance of paganism. This explains why in the Qur'an all prophets call themselves Muslims. According to the Qur'an all prophets were Muslims, what they taught was nothing but earlier versions of Islam, and their sincere followers were Muslims as well. Consequently, one should not regard Islam as an innovation that was brought by Prophet Muhammad (God's peace and Mercy be upon him), but as the original message of Allah (in its fundamentals) to all prophets throughout history. Specifically, the word Islam also refers to the religion that was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (God's peace and Mercy be upon him). None of the previous religions were specifically given this name by Allah, except for this last religion – Islam.

Islam was not named after a person or a group of people, nor was it decided upon by later generations of humans. Indeed, the name 'Islam' was given by Allah Himself as is clearly mentioned in the Qur'an in many verses, for example:

Indeed, the only religion accepted by Allah is Islam [Qur'an 3:19]

On the other hand, Christianity was named (by its followers) after Jesus, and Judaism after the tribe of Judah. However, it is not mentioned anywhere in the Bible that the religion of the followers of Prophets Ishaq alayhis Salaam (Isaac) and Musa alayhis Salaam (Moses) and their descendants is called Judaism, or that the religion of the followers of 'Eesa alayhis Salaam (Jesus) is called Christianity. In other words, the names 'Judaism' and 'Christianity' had no Divine origin or approval. It was not until long after 'Eesa alayhis Salaam (Jesus) ascension that the name 'Christianity' was given to the religion of those claiming to be his followers. The same applies for Buddhism, which was named after Gautama Buddha, Confucianism after Confucius and Hinduism after the Persian word for India, 'Hind', and so on.

Another reason for calling Christians, Buddhists and others as such is because their followers worship them (in the case of Jesus and Buddha). However, Muslims are not called as 'Muhammadans' because Muslims do not worship Muhammad (God's peace and Mercy be upon him); they worship 'Allah' and submit to Him alone. In fact, this phenomenon of naming an ideology after a person has become so common that many mistakenly label Islam as "Mohammedanism", although Muslims have never used, nor do they accept such a label.

HOW THE MESSAGE OF ISLAM WAS DISTORTED: Intro: The mainstream media in recent years, had targeted the Islamic religion and preaches hatred against it, even though the Muslim prophet Muhammad brought forth laws in seventh century Arabia, which were against racism, bigotry, oppression and violence. The fundamental principle of Islam was cemented on the notion of equality and Muslims claim that their prophet, Muhammad, spent his entire life campaigning to uproot injustice in the world. He forgave his enemies, most famous of which was his general amnesty to the Meccans who had persecuted him for over a decade and eventually drove him out of his birth place. As a result, Muhammad was attributed titles such as "the Trustworthy" and "the Merciful" even by his enemies. Until his dying breath, he attempted to abolish slavery by passing edicts mandating the emancipation of slaves since slavery was not compatible with the teaching of Islam or the Koran. The close household and friends of Muhammad freed over forty thousand slaves during the propagation of Islam. While many people around the world are misinformed about Muhammad's lifestyle and characteristics, others have given him the due credit for the many changes he brought about, but even more people are confused about the various traditions or false quotes which are wrongly attributed to him.

For example, there were many Christian converts to Islam in the early days of the prophet Muhammad, who often returned to their original faith, and sometimes, these men fabricated many fake quotations of the prophet to blend Christian beliefs in Islam. Most of these narrations were created with harmless motives, possibly with the sole intention of bringing Christ into the religion of the Muslims. For example, one popular narration in various Islamic

books of traditions are the stories about Jesus returning to the earth in the end of times, and judging everyone anew. Nowhere in Islamic literature and religious scripture was there any evidence of such a quotation and the prophet Muhammad was never heard speaking about the return of Jesus, as Muslims generally believe that Muhammad is the last messenger of god and no prophet will come into this earth again. However, several Christian scholars so zealously propagated this tradition (hadith) that many Muslim until this day, believe that Jesus Christ is in the fourth heaven and will return to earth before the end of times.

Christ's second coming is described in the bible, as being loud and glorious where every human on planet earth will be able to see Jesus because he is believed to return personally and literally. Revelation and Matthew also talk about the return of Christ which will illuminate the entire sky from the east to the west. Interestingly, nearly fifty identical Islamic traditions appeared several years after Muhammad's death that echo these Christian ideas, suggesting someone inserted these fake narrations into Islamic books of theology. However, the only Islamic text that has never been corrupted, edited. Altered or changed was the Koran, which Muslims still follow scrupulously.

Many Muslims scholars tried to erase all these Christian additions from their jurisprudence books, but they could not possibly cancel all of the fake traditions. Another Christian belief which seeped into the Muslim narrations was that man was created in the image of God, although all Koranic verses clearly describe God as being an entity of Light, and Muslims simply do not believe that man was created in God's image, but many such traditions exist in Muslim books. More than five thousand hadith or fake prophetic traditions were cancelled by Muslim jurists, but they could not erase all the errors, resulting in many false narrations to remain in today's books, like Bukhari. Although the only prophetic narration which is considered authentic is the volume of Matta Malik, which is unanimously accepted by all Muslims as the most accurate collection of Islamic traditions.

Some of the most degraded and fanatically superstitious people have been controlling the mainstream media in recent years and even though some call themselves Christians, they do not have even the remotest conception of the true teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, but they believe, or claim to believe, in the Christian dogmas. It requires something more to make a true Christian than the parrot-like repetition of certain words or ideas. Because if a man says he is a Mohammedan and does not follow that faith, nor does he comprehend or live up to the spirit of the teachings of their Prophet Muhammad, he cannot properly be taken as an example of the effects or tendencies of Islam. It is obvious that no religious system can fairly be judged by the acts and expressions of its professed followers; its fully established fundamental teachings and tenets only should guide us in forming an opinion of it.

Although Muhammad was a man of peace, hundreds of false quotations which have been attributed to him paint him in different light and caused many people of this era to dislike him. From his childhood, Muhammad was a righteous youth who was eager to restore the monotheistic faith of Abraham and Moses and Jesus and with the birth of Islam, Muhammad was able to ensure that civilisation dawned upon Arabia and, ultimately, to the entire world. His monotheistic religion exhorted its adherents to obey the God of Abraham, Moses and Jesus, and learn the teachings of the Koran, which Muhammad said, forbade murder, adultery, larceny, backbiting, slandering, female infanticide, forced marriages, polygamy, stoning of women, torturing and other vices. The purpose the Islamic religion served in seventh century Arabia was to unite all nations and tribes into one community, because the Muslim prophet Muhammad taught them that all men and women were the creation of one God and regardless of religion, race or culture, faith in the singular deity served to increase affection, love and kindness among them.

It is common knowledge that religions offer a way to expand on the idea of brotherhood and friendship and Muhammad's religion of Islam, like the other monotheistic religions like Judaism and Christianity, called upon people to worship the God of Abraham and live peacefully with one another. However, Muslim scholars lament that this message of love and peace is often distorted by some who run misinformation campaign and propaganda online that can confuse the honest seeker of knowledge and facts.

There are hundreds of fake hadith, or false prophetic traditions, which have been narrated by non-Muslim writers, and are in direct contradiction to the dogma and decrees of the Muslim Koran, suggesting that those fabrications were later additions to the Islamic religion in order to distort the teaching of Muhammad.

Jihad: Holy WAR IN ISLAM

In the name of Allah, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

The importance of this conference is due to its focus on the most critical concept in contemporary Islamic thought—that of Jihad, which occupies an important position in the edifice of Islam. Jihad is “the summit of Islam and its pinnacle” according to the hadith, and is the subject of widely divergent views and stances from within and outside Islam, views which have serious consequences for international relations, in view of Islam’s growing role internationally.

Those views, moreover, have an effect on relations between Muslims themselves, with their governments, and with non-Muslims, in view of the awakening witnessed across the Muslim world, both at the level of faith and the level of practice. This has led to a greater connection between Islam as a religion (creed, rituals, morals) and an ideology of great influence on the thought and behaviour of Muslims, socially and politically, or what is known as “political Islam”, in which jihad occupies a central position in one way or another.

This paper owes its importance to the position of the figure whose views on this crucial concept it attempts to present – that is Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who occupies an important position in contemporary Islam, as testified by his role at various levels: at the intellectual level, his writings have exceeded 150 works, covering all aspects of Islamic thought. In addition to his membership of the major intellectual and juristic councils, he was elected President of the International Union of Muslim Scholars, as well as being the chairman of the European Council for Fatwa and Research and a number of charity organisations, and a member of various Islamic Studies academic committees, including the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies. As for “political Islam”, he grew up inside one of its groups, the “Muslim Brotherhood”, occupying leading positions within it. He is also a rising star in the world of modern media, through his patronage of the most important Muslim website Islam-online, and through his famous weekly program on Aljazeera channel “Shar’iah and Life” which is followed weekly by over 60 million viewers.

Al-Qaradawi has developed a principal theory in contemporary Islam, from which all his views and stances emanate, and to which he tirelessly calls, widening its appeal and marginalizing its opponents – that is the principle of Islamic Wasatiyya or moderation. This was inspired by the verse in the second chapter of the Quran, “And thus we made you into a middle (wasat) nation.” Thus, he presents Islam as the middle position between opposing and conflicting rigid positions; as the middle ground that brings all together, – a middle position between materialism and spiritualism, between individualism and collectivism, between idealism and realism, etc. Starting from this wasati viewpoint, he presents all his ijtihads in all aspects of Islamic thought, including his ijihad on the question of jihad, as revealed in his latest book “The Fiqh of Jihad: a comparative study of its rulings and philosophy in light of the Quran and Sunnah”. This study was described by its author as one which “took several years of continuous work, and occupied his thought for decades”. The fruits of this work are presented in a momentous book of two volumes, in which he puts forward, from the wasati perspective, his views on this critical issue, elaborating his theory on jihad, which he hopes will contribute towards forming consensus on this grave matter. The book springs from the conviction that “it is dangerous and wrong to misunderstand jihad, to shed inviolate blood in its name, to violate property and lives and to taint Muslims and Islam with violence and terrorism, while Islam is completely innocent of such an accusation. However, our problem in such grave matters is that the truth gets lost between the two extremes of exaggeration and laxity.”

Our exposition of this momentous work will focus on clarifying the general view of jihad in Islam according to Shaykh Qaradawi based on the Quran and the Sunnah and their interaction with the tafsir and fiqh heritage as seen in the historical contexts in which it emerged, and through the current state of the Muslim ummah as it is engaged in major conflicts with the forces of despotism or with external forces, under the current power balances, a modern culture that glorifies the value of freedom, and an international law that recognises state sovereignty and limits legitimate war to self-defence. Within these contexts, Al-Qaradawi's view of jihad was formed. What we wish to explore is not its details, but the general picture – what is novel in it, particularly in relation to major questions, such as jihad's relation to freedom, and to relations between Muslims and others, whether it is inside or outside Muslim societies. So, what are the foundations of this methodology? What is jihad? What are its forms? What are its goals? Defensive or offensive? Between Dar al-Islam and Dar al-Kufr? What are the rulings regarding captives in Islam? Is there jihad within the ummah? Where is jihad in the ummah's current causes?

1. Issues of methodology:

In the introduction, the author defined the foundations for his study thus:

- a. Relying on the Quran as the absolutely authentic text which serves as the criterion for other sources including the Prophetic Sunnah. It is to be understood using the logic of its original language, Arabic, without forcing meaning onto the text, and on the basis that all its verses were revealed to be applied, "thus we questioned at length the claim of those who say that there is a verse in the Quran, which they called Ayat al-Sayf (the verse of the sword), which has allegedly abrogated one hundred and forty verses or more, although they differed over which verse that is". The author almost entirely invalidates the principle of abrogation in the Quran, depriving the extremists of a sharp weapon with which they have disabled hundreds of verses promoting kindness, forgiveness, dealing with non-Muslims with wisdom and beautiful preaching and distinguishing between a hostile unjust minority amongst non-Muslims with which defensive jihad can be used, and a peaceful majority towards which justice and kindness are due.
- b. Relying on authentic Sunnah which does not contradict stronger evidence, such as the Quran. Thus the author judges as weak sayings such as "I was sent with the sword" and others, using the tools of the science of Hadith. He also interprets an authentic hadith which commands fighting against people until they say "there is no God but Allah", by taking the generic word "people" as being used to mean a specific group, that is the hostile Arab polytheists.
- c. Benefiting from the rich heritage of fiqh, without bias towards a particular school, and without restricting oneself to the well-known schools, basing himself on the methods of comparative law, analysis, critique and selecting the most suitable opinion. He distinguishes between Fiqh and Shariah: the latter being of divine origin, and the former the product of intellectual effort to deduce the rulings of Shariah. True fiqh is not what is copied from books, but rather the jurist's own ijihad (intellectual exertion) to produce something suitable for his specific time and place, particularly as in our time, major changes have taken place.
- d. Using the method of comparison between Islam and other religions and legal systems.
- e. Relating fiqh to the current reality: The Muslim faqih (jurist) when speaking about jihad must realise the fixed principles in this matter, such as the law of tadaafu` (mutual checking), the obligation to prepare all possible sources of power to ward off the enemies, and to fight against those who initiate fighting against the Muslims, the prohibition of transgression, etc. There are, however, other matters that have emerged (considered mutaghayyirat, or changing factors), such as condemnation of war, seeking peace, and the emergence of international law, human rights conventions, the United Nations, and the sovereignty of states. In this respect, the author affirms that "we can live, under Islam, in a world that promotes peace and security rather than fear, tolerance rather than fundamentalism, love rather than hatred. We can live with the United Nations, international law, human rights conventions and environmentalist groups. In truth, our main problem with our rigid brothers who have closed all

doors and insisted on a single viewpoint is that they live in the past and not the present, in books rather than reality".

f. Adopting the methodology of wasatiya (moderation) in da'wah (preaching), teaching, ifta' (issuing legal edicts), research, reform and revival. Among the principles of this methodology in fiqh is to revive religion from within, through new ijtihads for our time, just as our previous scholars did for their time, through understanding secondary texts in the light of primary objectives, being firm when it comes to usool (fundamentals) and flexible in furu' (secondary matters), seeking wisdom whatever its source, and balancing between contemporary changes and Shariah fundamentals.

g. While studying "Fiqh al-Jihad", one can easily perceive its author's care not to present himself as the sole proponent of the above views amongst jurists. Instead he is very keen to refer to supporting views amongst old and contemporary scholars, even if such views were neglected or ignored, removing the dust that had collected and shedding light on them, presenting them in a more attractive appearance, and thus giving them new life. He is also careful to support his views with relevant values and expertise from modern culture, benefiting from his profound knowledge of the sources of Islamic culture and his familiarity with modern culture. Thus he constructs a new, coherent, well-rooted yet contemporary view of Islamic jihad, one which shares a wide common space with contemporary culture in relation to war and peace. What is new in this view is not the details, for its parts are scattered and buried deep inside books, but rather the whole picture, making this work a meeting point and a point of consensus, wherein all – or most – parties can find something familiar that facilitates their acceptance of what is unfamiliar. This ability to build consensus is a traditional characteristic of the great scholars. Thus the author does not exaggerate when describing the dire need among jurists, lawyers, Islamists, historians, Orientalists, diplomats, politicians, military men, and the educated masses for such a study.

2. The essence of jihad and its forms:

No Islamic concept has been the target of a continuous flow of attacks, and has brought a constant flow of attacks to Islam and Muslims, as much as that of jihad. It has fallen into the two extremes of exaggeration and laxity. The latter is promoted by a group that wants to abolish jihad from the life of the ummah, spreading the spirit of submission and surrender, under the guise of various calls such as tolerance and peace, described by the author as "agents of colonialism whose hostility to jihad is such that it has gone as far as creating groups which fabricated an Islam without jihad, and devoted themselves to promoting it, such as Bahais and Qadianis... At the other extreme, there is another group that makes of the concept of jihad a raging war it wages against the whole world, taking the natural state of things in relation to non-Muslims to be that of war, and regarding all people as enemies of Muslims, as long as they are not Muslim". This latter group may agree with those Orientalists who define jihad, as in the encyclopaedia of Islam as "spreading Islam by the sword, an individual duty upon all Muslims, such that it is almost a sixth pillar of Islam" (Encyclopaedia of Islam, Arabic Translation, p. 2778).

The author tackles this extremism on both sides, through the linguistic analysis of the word jihad, which essentially means exerting oneself, making an effort, and through its occurrence in the Quran and Sunnah and its use by Muslim jurists. He concludes that there is a clear distinction between jihad and qital (fighting), as the command to engage in jihad was revealed in Mecca where there was no fighting, but rather jihad of da'wah (preaching) through the Quran, "And strive against them with the utmost endeavour with it (the Quran)" (p. 50-52). The word is also used in the Quran and Sunnah with various meanings, including exerting oneself in resisting the enemy, resisting the devil, resisting one's desires, etc. Thus the word jihad is much wider than just fighting, for jihad, as the author quotes from Ibn Taymiyya, "can be with the heart, by calling to Islam, by countering invalid arguments, by advising or facilitating what is beneficial to Muslims, or by one's body, that is fighting".

The author further seeks support from a fourteenth century scholar, the eminent Ibn al-Qayyim, student of Ibn Taymiyya, in order to clarify the vast scope of jihad, which makes every Muslim a mujahid – but not a muqatil (fighter) by necessity. Ibn al-Qayyim concluded from his study of the process of Islamic da'wah that there are 13

levels of jihad: first, jihad al-nafs (jihad of the self) which comprises 4 levels, exerting oneself to learn the guidance, to act upon it, to call to it, and to persevere on those actions; second, jihad against shaytan, which includes 2 levels, struggling against the doubts in one's faith which Satan instigates, and resisting the desires and corruption to which he calls; third, jihad against the non-believers and hypocrites, including 4 levels: with one's heart, tongue, wealth, and self; and fourth, jihad against the oppressors and the corrupt, comprising 3 levels: with one's hand if possible, if not then with one's tongue, if not then with one's heart. The author differs in regarding jihad against oppression and corruption as preceding jihad against disbelief and external transgression, while stressing that peaceful confrontation is to be adopted against oppressors "profiting from the reasonable forms which others have developed in confronting unjust rulers, such as elected parliaments, parties, and the separation of powers" (p. 198).

The author also stresses the importance of intellectual and cultural jihad "through the establishment of specialist Islamic academic centres, catering for exceptional youth – academically and morally – in order to prepare them academically and intellectually in a methodology that unites our heritage and modern culture... We do not call for isolation from the rest of the world, but rather to cultural and civilisational interaction. We choose what to take or leave based on our own philosophy and criteria, just as they had borrowed from us in the past concepts and inventions which they then developed and used to build their civilization. What we take will be imbued with our own spirit, character and moral heritage such that it becomes a part of our intellectual and moral system, losing its original character" (p. 190-192).

The author concludes in his study of the fiqh of jihad in Islam that there are two types of jihad: civil and military – meaning fighting against enemies who attack Muslims, which necessitates preparing for it when there is a need; this type is a matter for states. Spiritual civil jihad "encompasses the academic, scientific, cultural, social, economic, educational, health, medical, environmental and civilisational fields. The objective of this civil jihad is to exert oneself for Allah's sake in order to educate the ignorant, employ the unemployed, train workers, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, house the homeless, treat the ill, achieve self-sufficiency for the needy, build schools for pupils, universities for students, mosques for worshippers, clubs for sports lovers to practice their hobbies" (p. 215).

3. Objectives of jihad

Islam is a call to peace; it abhors war, but cannot prevent it, hence it prepares for it, but does not wage it unless it is forced upon it, which is due to Islam's realistic nature and its recognition of sunnat al-tadafu', the law of mutual checking. However it has sought to limit its consequences by surrounding it with rules and ethics. Islam has not been the exception in recognising war of necessity amongst other religions, including Christianity, whose followers have been among the most frequent participants in conflicts and wars, both against other Christians and against others. Luke's Gospel reads "I have come to bring fire on the earth... Do you think I came to bring peace on earth?". The Old Testament contains numerous calls to genocide, against 7 nations that inhabited Palestine that had to be completely eradicated- such that the modern calls to "transfer" and massacres committed by modern Zionist gangs are but miniature versions.

Jihad in Islam has specific objectives which Al-Qaradawi summarises as repelling transgression; preventing fitna- that is guaranteeing freedom of faith for Muslims and others; saving the oppressed; punishing those who break treaties, and enforcing internal peace within the ummah. Thus, expansion and appropriation are not amongst the objectives of jihad, nor is the eradication of disbelief from this world, for that is against God's law of difference and mutual checking. Nor do the objectives of jihad include imposing Islam on those who do not believe in it, for that contravenes God's law of diversity and pluralism (pp. 423).

4. Military Jihad: Between Daf' and Talab (Defensive and Offensive Jihad)

Following the tradition of classical and contemporary jurists, Al-Qaradawi questions the nature of jihad and its status in Islam: Is it of a religious nature, meaning it is obligatory upon Muslims to fight non-believers until they embrace Islam or submit to its authority, which they call jihad al-talab, that is voluntary offensive jihad? Or is it of a

political nature, necessitated by the need to defend the lands of Islam against transgressors and to defend Muslims against those who prevent them from freedom of faith, and the oppressed generally- which they have termed jihad al-daf', that is necessary defensive jihad, which, if Muslims must engage it, should be engaged in with pure intentions, for God's sake, and following strict ethical guidelines which cannot be neglected.

Classically, and in the modern era, jurists have been divided between two groups, which al-Qaradawi calls the hujumiyyin (proponents of offensive jihad) and difa`iyyin (proponents of defensive jihad), proclaiming his proud adherence to the second group. The hujumiyyin consider it an obligation for the Muslim nation to attack the land of the non-believers at least once a year in order to call to Islam and expand its territories. They hold disbelief per se as a sufficient reason to initiate war and legitimate killing, even if non-believers do not attack or harm Muslims, to the extent that Muslims would be sinful if they do not do so. The proponents of this view, a large number of jurists, most prominent of which among classical scholars is Imam al-Shafi`i, and among contemporary thinkers are Sayyid Qutb and al-Mawdudi, support their view with evidence from the Quran and the Sunnah, and from historical practice. The Quranic texts used call for fighting against all polytheists, such as verse 36 of surat al-Tawba "and fight the polytheists all together as they fight you all together", verse 5 "Kill the idolaters wherever you find them", and verse 29 "Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day... until they pay the Jizya with willing submission". They differed as to which of those verses is the one they called Ayat al-Sayf, or verse of the sword, which, according to them, abrogated all contradicting verses, over 200 such verses calling for mercy, forgiveness and freedom of belief, prohibiting compulsion in faith and severity, and considering the judgment of people's faith a matter to be left to God alone. They also sought support from prophetic sayings such as "I have been commanded to fight people until they say 'there is no God but Allah'" (narrated by Bukhari). They also consider the early Islamic conquests as evidence for their view that war, rather than peace, is the natural state in Muslims' dealings with others.

Al-Qaradawi's disagreement with the above group does not prevent him from looking for excuses for them, particularly classical scholars, due to the relations between states at their time, which were based on power and war, and due to the existential threat to which Islam had been subjected since its birth in the Arab peninsula.

Al-Qaradawi stresses, alongside classical and contemporary scholars, the consensus that jihad becomes obligatory upon every Muslim if a Muslim land is attacked, or Muslims suffer fitna (are prevented from freedom of faith), and that every Muslim must practice some form of jihad, be it striving against one's desires, against evil and corruption, and striving to promote good and support religion, as much as one is able to. However, Al-Qaradawi, through his study and analysis of the various texts related to jihad and the views of classical and contemporary scholars concluded the following:

1. That Quranic verses, particularly those of surat al-Tawba commanding fighting against all polytheists, are to be understood as a reaction and an equal retribution, just as the verse says "as they fight you all together", and not a general command or a basis for dealing with all non-Muslims, but was rather concerning a specific group of the Arab polytheists which declared war on Islam since its emergence, chased it out and followed it to its new home, broke treaties and mobilized everyone to eradicate it "Will you not fight people who violated their oaths, plotted to expel the Messenger, and took the aggressive by being the first to assault you?" (The Quran, 9:13). Within the same chapter, as well as in other chapters, there are limits and conditions restricting the above –seemingly general-command: "And if they incline to peace, then incline to it" (8:61). There is no need to set one verse of the Quran against another; rather one should look at all relevant verses and ahadith, all of which confirm the rule that Islam seeks peace with those who are peaceful towards it, and fights those who fight it.
2. Military jihad is not an individual obligation upon every Muslim, of the same level as the obligations of the testimony of faith, prayer, fasting, alms giving and pilgrimage, for despite its importance within Islam, it was not included in the inherent characteristics of the God-conscious in surat al-Baqara, nor in the characteristics of the believers as described in surat al-Anfal or surat al-Mu'minun, nor in the characteristics of those with true understanding as described in surat al-Ra`d, nor in the characteristics of the servants of the Most Merciful as

described in surat al-Furqan, nor in the characteristics of the pious in surat al-Dhariyat, nor of the righteous ones described in surat al-Insan. Thus, the practice of military jihad only becomes an obligation upon Muslims when its conditions arise such as an attack on Muslims, their land or their religion. Preparing for such an incidence, on the other hand, is an obligation upon them, according to their ability, in order to deter enemies and maintain peace.

3. There is no obligation upon Muslims to invade the lands of non-Muslims, if they are safe from them. It is sufficient for them to have a powerful army in possession of the latest weapons and trained soldiers guarding their borders and deterring enemies such that the latter do not think of attacking Muslims, for the collective duty to be fulfilled (p. 91). It is worth noting that Al-Qaradawi prefers using the term non-Muslims instead of kuffar or disbelievers, for that is the way of the Quran which uses the terms "O people of the Book", "O people", "O Man", "O Children of Israel", "My people", "O Children of Adam". It never addressed non-Muslims as disbelievers, except in a few exceptional cases where there were negotiations regarding creed.

4. Islam recognised freedom of belief and each individual's responsibility for his belief before God. On that basis, its societies, on the whole, did not experience religious wars. Under it, various monotheistic and pagan religions coexisted and continue to coexist, under the system of Dhimma which granted citizenship to non-Muslims regardless of religion. All they needed to do in order to enjoy the rights of protection by the Muslim state alongside Muslims was for those able to pay the jizya tax to do so, which is equivalent to the military service tax in some modern systems. According to Al-Qaradawi, unifying the tax rate and generalising military service make such a system which has been misunderstood and misused unnecessary.

5. It was historical conditions, rather than the texts of Islam, that made many jurists believe offensive jihad to invade non-Muslim lands to be obligatory. The ummah was constantly threatened by its powerful neighbours, the Persians and Romans (p. 82), and there were no international laws based on mutual recognition of state sovereignty and prohibition of hostility as is the case today- despite their contravention by the powerful.

6. The natural state of affairs in relations between Muslim and others is peace and cooperation in goodness. Islam abhors war and only engages in it unwillingly and as a necessity "Fighting is prescribed for you, though it is hateful to you" (Quran, 2:216). Peace is the essential character of Islam; it is the greeting of Muslims, the greeting of the people of Paradise, it is one of the names of Allah. The most hated name in Allah's sight is Harb- which means war, one of the ancient Arab names, as Arabs were warriors. However, when the Prophet, peace be upon him, was told by his son-in-law that his daughter Fatima had given birth to a boy and that he called him Harb, he commanded him to name him Hasan (meaning good).

7. Islam welcomes international conventions that prohibit transgression and promote peace between nations, and welcomes international bodies that protect such laws, such as the United Nations, UNESCO, etc. However, the West still maintains its belief in the principle of power in its relation with other states and other nations. An example of that is the exclusive enjoyment of its major states of the right to veto, in a flagrant disregard for the principle of equality, thus guaranteeing the protection of their interest and the avoidance of any condemnation of its violations, as the US and UK did in their invasion of Iraq, without any legitimacy, with full impunity from any condemnation, and similarly with their continuous protection of the Zionists' various forms of hostility against Palestine and its people.

8. Under international recognition of human rights, including freedom of belief and preaching, as well as freedom to establish institutions and protect minorities, one of the principal justifications of jihad al-talab becomes redundant, that is invasion in order to enable the call to Islam by dismantling oppressive regimes which used to prevent their people from thinking freely or choosing beliefs that are different to those of their rulers, such as the Pharaoh who reprimanded the Children of Israel for believing without his permission: "He said: You believe in him before I give you leave?" (Quran, 20:71). In contrast, today, unprecedentedly, in any previous era of Islam history, mosques and Muslim minorities are found everywhere, making our need greater for "huge armies of competent preachers, teachers, media experts, all suitably trained and able to address the world in its different languages, and

using methods of this modern age, which, unfortunately, we possess less than a thousandth of what is required”, (p.16). Al-Qaradawi laments that you may find many who are ready to die for Allah’s sake, but very few who are willing to live for His sake.

9. The sources of Islam reveal that, according to Islam, the world is three abodes: dar al-Islam, the abode of Islam, where its law reigns, where its rituals are publicly practiced, and where its adherents and preachers are secure; Dar al-‘ahd- the abode of accord, that is states between which and the Muslim state there is mutual recognition and prohibition of hostility; and finally dar harb, or the abode of war. Al-Qaradawi regards Muslims, in view of their being part of the system of the United Nations, as being in a state of accord/pact with other states, except with the Zionist state, because of its usurpation of the land of Palestine and its dispossession of its people, which unfortunately took place with the support of major states. Thus Al-Qaradawi considers the greatest problem in our relation with the West to be its constant and unlimited support of Israel and its continuous aggression against Palestine and its people.

10. Al-Qaradawi distinguishes between jihad and irhab- terrorism, or between legitimate irhab -being feared by the enemy to deter it from any aggression, and illegitimate irhab, that is terrorizing innocent people as done by groups using the name of Islam, which declare world on the whole world in an illegitimate use of jihad in an inappropriate setting, terrorizing innocent people- Muslims and non-Muslims- in order to achieve alleged political ends inside or outside Muslim lands, flagrantly contravening the principles and ethics of jihad in Islam. Hence Al-Qaradawi condemned violent acts committed by extremist groups in Muslim and non-Muslim countries against innocent people, whether tourists or others. He further stripped the indiscriminate killing and shedding of innocent lives committed by these groups of any legitimacy.

11. Al-Qaradawi is extremely careful to distinguish between extremist groups that declare war on the whole world, killing indiscriminately, tainting the image of Islam and providing its enemies with fatal weapons to use against it, on the one hand, and on the other groups resisting occupation. And as much as he condemns the former and delegitimizes its foundations, he defends the latter, and calls on the ummah to support them, particularly in Palestine, as long as their operations are against military targets. He does not hesitate to justify martyrdom operations, considering them to be the weapon of one with no other options, who is deprived of equivalent weapons to those of the enemy, in order to defend his home and his land. God’s justice does not allow the weak to be completely deprived of any weapon, hence the latter’s use of his own body as a deterrent weapon. In any case, the ethics of jihad must always be respected, and only combatants can be targeted.

12. As he stresses that the first jihad to be obligatory upon the ummah in this age is liberation from colonialism, particularly in Palestine, Al-Qaradawi warns and stresses the fallacy of those who wrongly believe that the conflict between us and Zionists is due to the fact that they are Semites- for we are also Semites, both of us coming from the progeny of Abraham- or that it is a religious conflict- for Muslims regard Jews as People of the Book, whose food is lawful, with whom marriage is lawful, and who have lived amongst Muslims in safety and have sought refuge in our lands when Spain and other European countries expelled them, finding refuge nowhere but among Muslims. In reality, the conflict between us and Zionists started for one single reason: their appropriation of the land of Palestine, dispossessed its people, and imposed their presence with violence. The conflict will continue as long as its causes remain. No one can give up any Muslim land, but it is possible to have a truce with Israel for an agreed period of time. As for the principle of “Land for Peace”, it is indeed a bizarre principle imposed by the logic of the enemy’s brute force, for the land is our land, not the enemy’s, so that it can bargain it in return for peace (p. 1090).

13. Just as he, and his mentor Sheikh Muhammad al-Ghazali, had a leading role in confronting those extremist groups and preventing them from hijacking Islam and diverting it from its mainstream towards the margins, through stripping their actions of any legitimacy based on jihad, both inside and outside Muslim lands, Al-Qaradawi praised the important revisions made by the most important of those groups, which found great support in his

writings- after having attacked and rejected his views- in order to engage in their revisions, which he described as brave and enlightened (p. 1168).

5. Ethics of Jihad:

"War in Islam is ethical, just like politics, economics, science and work, none which is divorced from ethics, in contrast to war in western civilisation, which is not necessarily bound by ethics." For Muslims, war is governed by a moral code, because morals are not an option, but rather an essential part of religion. That includes: a) Islam's prohibition of the use of unethical methods to infiltrate the enemy and obtain their secrets- including sex, intoxicants, etc. b) prohibition of transgression, as the Quran commands "Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you, but do not transgress. Lo! Allah loveth not aggressors." (2:190). The author interprets transgression to mean killing non-combatants, by killing women, children, the elderly, the ill, farmers, and others not engaged in fighting (p. 728). The ethics of jihad also include the prohibition of mutilation of the enemy. c) the fulfilment of agreements and prohibition of treachery and betrayal. d) Prohibition of cutting down trees and demolishing buildings. e) The non-legitimacy, Islamically, of what is called weapons of mass destruction, such as chemical, biological or nuclear weapons which kills thousands or millions at once, without discriminating between the guilty and innocent, destroying life and all living beings. Islam prohibits the use of such weapons, because Islam prohibits the killing of non-combatants, as the Prophet, peace be upon him, strongly condemned the killing of one woman in one battle. However, that does not prevent the ummah from seeking to acquire such deterrent weapons, since others are in possession of them and can threaten Muslim nations with those weapons, particularly as the Zionist enemy which has usurped its land is in possession of such weapons, and their scripture legitimises the obliteration of all their neighbours. What is astonishing is that America and other great nations prohibit other nations from possessing these weapons, while they themselves possess them. They prevent Arab and Muslim states from acquiring them, while Israel possesses over two hundred nuclear heads. The mutual deterrence between the western and eastern blocks had contributed to the maintenance of world peace, and similarly between India and Pakistan. Such weapons cannot be used, except in the most exceptional circumstances, when a nation is subject to an existential threat (p. 592). F) Islam enjoins its mujahidin to treat captives kindly. After a detailed discussion of all texts and all juristic opinions concerning war captives, particularly on the question of whether they can be killed, the author concluded that the final ruling is that revealed in surat Muhammad "either set them free as a favor or let them ransom (themselves)" (47:4), possibly with the exception of war criminals. On the whole, the author approves the articles of the Geneva Convention regarding the treatment of captives.

In conclusion: Al-Qaradawi's study on the fiqh of jihad can be regarded as an authentic Islamic ijtihad, upholding the principle of jihad as an eternal Islamic mechanism of defence in its wider meaning, one which has suffered a great number of misrepresentations leading to tainting the image of Islam. Al-Qaradawi recuperates the effectiveness and moderation of this mechanism, taking it out of the hands of extremists. His courage in standing up to the campaigns waged against the concept of Islam has been just as great as his courage in rejecting the arguments of extremist groups who declare war against the entire world. He did not shy away from criticising the great number of jurists who uphold the principle of offensive war (jihad al-talab), nor was he ashamed of his proud adherence to the group believing in jihad as defensive only. He continues to counter the arguments of the former group, without fear or hesitation, without injustice, undermining or misrepresenting the views of those he disagrees with, but rather he seeks excuses for them. He has continued to do so, until he almost destroyed what is known as jihad al-talab, establishing instead defensive jihad in its wider meaning, jihad with no trace of relation to the charge of terrorism -which he clearly distinguishes from legitimate resistance of occupation-, a jihad with ethics that agree with international conventions and their principles, values and laws prohibiting aggression, occupation, the use of weapons of mass destruction and the torture of captives; a jihad that welcomes an open world in which ideas and persons move freely, dealing through proofs and arguments rather than violence and power, until the most valid triumphs. Through such a presentation of jihad, Al-Qaradawi has opened a vast space for dialogue, tolerance, agreement and coexistence between Islam and other religions, human values, and international accords, enabling a response to the eternal Quranic call "O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have

made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct." (49:13)

The key verses in the Qur'an concerning the justification of resorting to combative jihad are the following:

[And fight in God's cause against those who wage war against you, but do not commit aggression, for, verily, Allah does not love the aggressors. And slay them wherever you may come upon them, and drive them away from wherever they drove you away, for oppression is even worse than killing. And fight not against them near the Sacred Mosque until they fight against you first, but if they fight against you, slay them: such is the recompense of the rejecters of truth. But if they desist (from aggression), behold, Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful. And fight against them until there is no more oppression and religion belongs to God (i.e. until people can worship Allah without fear of persecution), but if they desist, then all hostility shall cease, except against those who commit injustice.] (Al-Baqarah 2:190-194)

It is obvious from these key verses that the only two justifications of the combative-type of jihad are to stop aggression and severe oppression. The condition for ceasing hostilities is not acceptance of Islam, but halt to aggression and oppression.

Like the above verses, there are a few verses in the Qur'an which sanction fighting. These verses, however, when understood in their textual and historical context deal with war situations and should not be generalized. The description of the aggressors or oppressors as rejecters of faith or idolatrous people does not mean that they are to be fought against on account of being non-Muslims. Historically, these aggressors happened to be non-Muslims. In fact, the Qur'an allows fighting against fellow Muslims if they are aggressors and other means of restoring peace and justice have failed (Al-Hujurat 49:8-9). The issue is allowing fighting in the presence of aggression, not difference of religion.

No single verse in the Qur'an, when placed in its proper textual and historical context, permits fighting others on the basis of their faith, ethnicity, or nationality. To do so contradicts several established values and principles discussed in the previous section. Combative jihad is not only restricted in terms of what may or may not justify it; it is also strictly regulated. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) taught us how to behave on the battlefield. As a "hated act," war should not be resorted to if other peaceful and just means may stop aggression or oppression. Intentions must be pure and no selfish personal or nationalistic agenda should be the driving force. There must be a declaration of war by a legitimate authority after due consultation. No non-combatants should be hurt. All must refrain from looting and unnecessary destruction. Prisoners of war and the injured must be treated humanely.

It should be noted that in the long history of Muslim people, there were times when such conditions and rules were adhered to and other times where there were violations to differing degrees. There have also been some misinterpretations of the concept by some scholars, possibly influenced at least in part, by the circumstances of the time in which they lived. The fact remains, however, that Islamic teachings should not be driven either by what some Muslims did in the past or are doing today or by misinterpretations from the past or present.

This paper would not be complete without addressing some commonly misunderstood often misrepresented quotes from the Qur'an. These are dealt with in the next section.

Common Questions and Objections

1. How do you explain verses in the Qur'an that encourage killing non-Muslims wherever they are found (9:5) and others that allow fighting against Jews, Christians, and other neighboring non-Muslims (9:29, 123)?

Answer: To begin with, the verse (9:5) has nothing to do with the People of the Book (Jews and Christians), who are distinguished from other non-Muslims. The Qur'anic text (98:1) makes a clear distinction between the People of the Book or Ahl Al-Kitab and the idolatrous people, al-mushrikeen, the term used in 9:5.

Furthermore, all these and similar verses have been sometimes misconstrued and taken out of their textual and historical context. They have been taken out of their textual context by ignoring the verses before and after the quoted ones, as well as ignoring other verses in the Qur'an which relate to the same issues and thus shed light on their true meanings. They have also been taken out of the historical context that could explain why they were revealed and how they should be applied.

All of these verses, without exception, if studied carefully, address aggression and oppression committed against Muslims at the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), whether by idolatrous Arabs, some of the Jewish tribes in Madinah, or by some Christians. Most, however, apply to the Makkans and other idolatrous Arabs aggressors. Some of the antagonists tortured, and in certain cases killed, Muslims because of their faith, for example the killing of Sumayyah and her husband Yasir. Some killed the memorizers of the Qur'an who were simply on their way to preach its message of Allah's Oneness in a peaceful manner. Some of them killed the messengers sent by the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), which is equivalent in today's international law to killing the ambassador of another country—an act of war. Some of them gathered armies, like the Christians in Tabuk, in order to attack Muslims. Some of them wrote letters to their local governors to go and kill the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) unless he recanted his claim of prophethood, as was the case with the Emperor of Persia. Some betrayed peace treaties and killed unsuspecting peaceful people without provocation, contrary to agreements, such as the breaking of the Treaty of Hudaybiah by the Makkans. The issue here is not religion, but rather injustice, oppression, and aggression.

- There are many verses in the Qur'an stating that those who coexist peacefully with Muslims are entitled to justice, compassion, and respect, irrespective of their religion (60:8-9) as long as they are peaceful with Muslims.
- If it were true that the Qur'an instructs that any non-Muslim should be killed because of his or her religion, then what would explain the fact that religious minorities through 1,400 years of Muslim history not only survived, but also thrived and found freedom to practice their faiths under Muslim rule? Clearly, Muslims as a people were not perfect, yet there were times when they had enough power to eliminate almost all non-Muslims under their rule. The historical record shows that they did not abuse this power. The restraint they showed seems to be influenced in the first place by the Qur'anic injunctions against coercion in religion.
- The Qur'an allows a Muslim man to get married to a Christian or Jewish woman. If it were true that the Qur'an demands killing non-Muslims, how could it permit a Muslim man to marry such women? Marriage is the closest human relationship and is described in the Qur'an as a relationship characterized by peace, love, and compassion (30:21), not murder because of theological differences.

2. Is Islam imperialistic? Are there verses in the Qur'an stating that Islam is the religion of truth, and therefore it must prevail over all other religions? (9:33, 48:28 and 61:9)

Answer: True Islam, practiced according to its original sources, the Qur'an and Sunnah, is not imperialistic at all. Some Muslim rulers throughout history may have deviated from its teachings in some degree or the other. Their actions, however, are not to be equated with normative Islam. Some jurists even gave opinions that seemed to have justified these actions. Such interpretations may have been influenced by the kind of world in which they lived, which is vastly different from ours today. None of these scholars claimed infallibility or finality of their interpretations. Yet, whether such interpretations were valid for their times and specific circumstances or whether they were contrary to the overall text and spirit of Islam, the fact remains that interpretation of the primary sources of Islam is an endeavor which is not frozen in time. Historically, those who espoused such arguments may have erred in understanding some parts of the Qur'an. They may have failed to understand how those parts fit into the total picture of the teachings of the Qur'an teachings on the relationship between Muslims and others.

- History bears testimony that Islam spread much faster during the periods of peace, not war. Even in periods when Muslims did not “prevail” economically, socially, militarily, or politically, Islam continued to spread. The same phenomenon can be seen in our time, which is a time of great suffering and persecution of Muslims in many parts of the world. Even some of those who attacked Islam and Muslims and committed horrible massacres of Muslims, such as the Mongols and the Crusaders, ultimately accepted Islam themselves. It is rather interesting to see the conqueror accepting the faith of the conquered rather than the reverse.

Clear historical and geographical facts show that Islam has spread more by peaceful means than by force. A look at the map of the Muslim world today shows that the bulk of Muslims live in countries where there was no fighting, not even defensive fighting. An example is Indonesia, with nearly 200 million Muslims. Thomas Arnold, a former Christian missionary in India, in his famous book *Preaching of Islam*, indicated that while there have been certain periods where Muslim rulers have diverted from this tolerance, it was the fault of the rulers and not attributed to Islamic teachings. He concludes that the two primary reasons for the spread of Islam all over the world were the merchants and the Sufis (mystics), two groups of people who went out, worked with humanity, and gently invited others to the path of Allah.

- If it were true that Islam allows use of force to convert people, then how did religious minorities thrive in regions under Muslim rule? It is also worth asking why did the Qur'an and Sunnah explicitly dictate regulations and rights for the protection of non-Muslim minorities living under the rule of Islam, if other religions are to be eliminated so that Islam may “prevail.” The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) even said that if a Muslim hurts a dhimmi or covenanted person (a non-Muslim living under the rule of Islam) or commits any injustice to him, then on the Day of Judgment, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) will be the advocate on behalf of the non-Muslim against the Muslim.
- What is the sense of these prescriptions and advice if those people had to accept Islam or be killed? Why does the Qur'an repeatedly speak about peaceful dialogue with non-Muslims (Al-'Ankabut 29:46) if they have to be killed in the first place? If indeed Islam insists on the use of force for conversion, then why did people, when no longer under Muslim rule, not revert back to their previous faiths?

- It is true that three verses in the Qur'an (At-Tawbah 9:33, Al-Fath 48:28, and As-Saff 61:9) state that Allah sent forth His Messenger (Muhammad) with the message of guidance and the religion of truth, so that it may “prevail” over all religions. What does prevail mean in this context? Must we limit our understanding of the word prevail to the narrow context of military or political power? There have been many tyrannical empires throughout history that prevailed economically, politically, or militarily at one time or another. Their dominance was impermanent. This is a very superficial and temporary type of prevailing. Real prevailing is the prevailing of the truth and belief in the One True God and all that that implies. In fact, a better translation of the original Qur'anic Arabic term *li-yuzhirahu* is “to proclaim it,” rather than “to make it prevail.” This was the translation adopted by Abullah Yusuf Ali.

3. Doesn't the Qur'an state that Muslims should never take Jews and Christians for friends?

Answer: This is an incorrect translation in the first place. The Qur'an does not tell Muslims not to take Jews and Christians as friends. The word used in the Qur'an is *awliyaa'*, which means “overlords” or “protectors,” not mere friends. If we look at the verses that deal with this injunction, we will notice that they always refer to negative situations. For example, in Al-Ma'idah 5:57-58, the context refers to those who mock you as Muslims when you call for Prayers. Would any sane person of any religion take as their defender one who mocks them in this way? It is not appropriate to view these verses in isolation, since there are many verses that teach how peaceful relationships should be developed with non-Muslims.

- Coming back to the question of marriage, which is more intimate, the marital relationship or friendship? According to the Qur'an (Al-Ma'idah 5:5), a Muslim man can marry a Jewish or Christian woman. As a wife, her Muslim husband has obligations to her. As revealed in Surah 30, Ar-Rum, (The Romans), verse 22, he should dwell

with her in peace and treat her with love and compassion. Does it make sense that a Muslim would be permitted to marry a non-Muslim, but not befriend her?

4. Why does the Qur'an refer to Jews and Christians as kuffar or infidels? What kind of respect and tolerance is that?

Answer: Again, here is a big mistake with translation, one that is sometimes committed by Muslims, too. If you look at the English dictionary meaning of infidel, it means someone who does not have a faith or does not believe in Allah. Does the Qur'an say that the Jews and Christians do not believe in Allah? No. Surah 29, Al-'Ankabut, verse 46, says that the God of Christians, Jews, and Muslims is one and the same. The word infidel is an inaccurate translation of the word kafir in this case.

The term kafir, referring to a person, or kufr, referring to an act, is used in the Qur'an in a variety of contextual meanings. This is why I hesitate to use even the terms non-believer or disbeliever for the translation, as it is not clear from these English terms what is the object of unbelief or disbelief: God? a particular prophet? others? I would prefer the term non-Muslim, as it applies to various categories of kufr, whether it refers to knowingly rejecting the message of Islam (disbelief) or being a non-Muslim due to the lack of awareness of the authentic message of Islam (unbelief). Following are examples of the varied contextual uses of the term kufr in the Qur'an:

- Kufr is sometimes used in a positive sense. A good believer can also be a kafir. How? The Qur'an says "Faman yakfur bil taghout wayu'mim billah." (whoever rejects taghut and believes in Allah) (Al-Baqarah 2:56). Anyone who believes in one thing is a kafir (rejecter) of its opposite.
- Kufr can be used in a neutral or benign sense, as the origin of kufr in the Arabic language means "to cover up." So the farmer who is putting a seed in the ground and covering it up is performing kufr. Spiritually, deliberate deviation from the true and authentic prophets is a form of "cover-up" of truth.
- The word kufr can also be applied to a Muslim when he is doing something wrong, but not necessarily something that would place him or her outside the state of belief in Islam. For example, a Muslim who is able to go for Hajj but does not go, without denying the need to go, would be committing an act of kufr in a sense of ungratefulness to Allah (3:96-97).
- Kufr is used in Qur'an as the opposite of shukr, "to be grateful" (31:12).
- Kafir is used in the Qur'an, not only to refer to Jews or Christians, but also those who rejected the prophets and denied the existence of God. It has been used to refer to the people of Noah and the people of Abraham. It has also been used to refer to those who denied prophethood and rejected the existence of Allah altogether, which obviously is not the case with Christians and Jews.
- It can be used in a more serious sense, but with a variety of meanings. It refers to the rejection of Islam. It describes one who knows the truth, but rejects it out of pride or vanity. This is someone who knows the truth in his or her heart and deliberately rejects it. Nonetheless, we cannot assess this. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) gave Muslims very clear instructions after one incident when people assumed to know why someone professed belief in Islam. He asked them whether they had opened up his heart, did they know whether what was in his heart was sincere. The bottom line is that we have to leave it to Allah; only Allah knows the sincerity of a particular person's acceptance. Allah is All-Knowing, and He is the only Judge of all of us.

5. Why does the Qur'an speak approvingly of the persecution of Jews in Madinah? Doesn't that betray an element of anti-Semitism or anti-Jewishness, and why does the Qur'an describe Jews and idolatrous people as the most inimical to the believers (Al-Ma'idah 5:85)? Isn't that confirmed by the Prophet's "massacre and persecution" of the Jews of Madinah?

Answer: It is incorrect to say that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was anti-Semitic because he was actually of Semitic heritage himself, as a descendant of Prophet Abraham through his first son Prophet Ishmael. The Western public is accustomed to understanding “anti-Semitism” as referring only to the Jewish people. Many Arabs, including Palestinians, are Semitic people, yet no one speaks about “anti-Semitism” against them in the brutal and nearly genocidal ways in which they are treated by the Israeli government and military, a matter which is objected to by many decent humans, including many Jews.

- How could the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) be anti-Jewish when the Qur'an mentions the name of Moses (peace and blessings be upon him) and other Israelite prophets in terms of great praise? The Qur'an describes the original Torah that was revealed to Moses (peace and blessings be upon him) as giving light and guidance, and the Qur'an demands respect for the rights of all peacefully coexisting people, including Jews.
- Criticism in the Qur'an is not about Judaism or Christianity. The criticism in the Qur'an is aimed at distortion and wrong actions committed by Christians, Jews, as well as some Muslims; it does not criticize the pristine message revealed by Allah to Moses (peace and blessings be upon him) and Jesus (peace and blessings be upon him). Just as the Biblical text includes criticism of believers, whether followers of Moses (peace and blessings be upon him) or Jesus (peace and blessings be upon him), the Qur'an also cites wrong actions of Muslims and other groups. Furthermore, criticism is not meant for the sake of criticism, but rather to warn Muslims in particular against repeating the same mistakes in the future.
- What is clear, historically, about Prophet Muhammad's dealings with the Jewish tribes in and around Madinah is that as soon as he migrated to Madinah, he established the constitution of Madinah or sahifa. As Dr. Hamidullah described it, it was the first multicultural, multi-religious constitution in the world. It gave everyone equal rights, including the Jews. It conferred legal autonomy and the right to practice one's own religion freely, and it required a commitment to defend the city of Madinah against external aggression. None can accuse the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) of breaking this agreement. Even non-Muslim scholars such as Montgomery Watts never mention that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) betrayed his agreements. In fact, other parties committed acts that were contrary to the agreements on more than one occasion. Whatever penalty was applied, however, it was only applied to the specific group of people who committed the offense, not to all. If it was applied to all, one might suspect group bias, such as anti-Semitism, but it was only to the offending tribe.
- Furthermore, the punishment was always proportionate to the offense that was committed. Uncovering a Muslim woman was different from conspiring to kill the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), and such actions were handled in different ways. The ultimate betrayal occurred during the Battle of the Trench, when a group of Jews from Madinah contacted the enemy, unilaterally renounced the constitution of Madinah, and helped the enemy during war against the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and Madinah. In modern times, this is referred to as high treason at the time of war.
- Referring to this incident, many say the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) massacred the tribe of Banu Quraizhah, but this is a distortion of the historical facts. In fact, it was not a sentence by the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). The people of Banu Quraizhah chose their own arbitrator and former ally (Sa'd), who determined their punishment according to the law of the Torah, which specifies killing for treason. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) simply agreed with his sentence, but it was not the sentence of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) in the first place. A scholarly article by W. N. Arafat questions the exaggerated estimate of the number of fighting men who were punished, which is found even in some biographies about the Prophet's life, like that of Ibn Ishaq. His argument is compelling and well researched.
- The main question is whether 5:85 speaks of all Jews and at all times or to those who were hostile to Muslims and betrayed them contrary to their treaty. Given both the textual and historical contexts, it refers only to those

who adopted an attitude or initiated enmity, if not outright aggression, against Muslims, not to a whole religious group.

Conclusion

We certainly live in a world where individuals, groups, and governments commit various forms of violence and terror. Such violence is committed in the name of ideology—narrow forms of nationalism and religion. Counteracting violence with more devastating violence enhances that vicious cycle. Huge resources have been devoted to fighting violence, usually by equal or even worse violent means. Little attention has been paid to finding out the root causes of violence, such as gross injustice and dehumanization of others. A fraction of these resources, coupled with a sense of honor, justice, and human equality would deal with most violence in a more constructive way. While religion has been abused to justify senseless and unnecessary violence, it can be constructively invoked to stem the tide of violence. The common values of revealed religions, in particular, can contribute immensely in that endeavour. It is the duty of religious clergy and religious scholars to clarify these values and clarify misinterpretations of scriptures, not only to others, but also for their own religious communities. Interfaith dialogue is as much needed as interfaith dialogue. I hope that this humble contribution may be a step in that direction.

Thank you and may the peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be with you.

REFUTING THE CHRISTIAN LIE THAT PROPHET CONSIDERED WOMEN AS “DOGS AND DONKEYS”

Christian Missionary Liars and ‘topic-changers’ attempt to prove that women are considered no better than dogs and donkeys by the Holy Prophet in the Ahadith by quoting various traditions.

“You have made us (i.e. women) dogs.”

The following is a false and fabricated narration allegedly narrated ‘Aisha: The things which annul the prayers were mentioned before me. They said, “Prayer is annulled by a dog, a donkey and a woman (if they pass in front of the praying people).” I said, “You have made us (i.e. women) dogs. I saw the Prophet praying while I used to lie in my bed between him and the Qibla. Whenever I was in need of something, I would slip away. for I disliked to face him.”(Sahih Bukhari 1:9:490)

The vast majority of the quotation by Aisha has been inserted into the books of Islam by numerous Christian monks and priests who pretended to convert to Islam in order to disqualify the religion of Muhammad, who they believed was a false prophet. These were the very men who also falsely quoted Aisha as saying she married Muhammad when she was a mere girl.

FALSE ALLEGATIONS AND LIES ON THE PROPHET: REFUTING THE CHRISTIAN LIE OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD BEING INAPPROPRIATE WITH A DEAD BODY

[This is a refutation to those who are throwing the filthy allegations on Prophet Muhammad]

I remember my own mother when I faced great struggles at the time of war and I recall how my mother gave up her share of each meal so me and my sibling could enjoy a full meal, and Muhammad, who was equally attached to his aunt, lay beside her grave in his grief, but sick and vengeful men and women have turned such an emotional scene into unspeakably sick and perverted scene. This shocks me beyond worlds. Sick people made it such as if they have no humanity. Their hatred made them so blind and insane, that no animal would ever accuse another beast in such manner.

As a mother and as a woman, it makes me horrified to even repeat the allegations against Muhammad, the prophet of Islam. It is a nonsensical and a malicious claim which is gaining some popularity amongst the aberrations on the internet.

The simplest way to disprove this allegation is to go to Islamic Jurisprudence. Looking into Islamic theology, let us see what does the expert (Ibn Hajar Haytami) say? If we consult Fiqh we realise "it is unlawful to look at the nakedness of the deceased or touch it."

It is important to be able to explain it as there is a growing number of willing propagators of such falsehood, thus this false claim will only become popular if good people sit on their hands.

Analysing the Allegation: Authentic?

The narration which is used is from a book named Kanza ul Amal. This book contains fabricated and weak narrations, thus is not recognised as an authoritative source (individual narrations need to be checked).

Regardless of the authenticity let's still look at the narration and context to gain understanding so we can realise the actual meaning of such a narration (regardless of authenticity)

The Narration:

Narrated by Ibn Abbas: "I (Muhammad) put on her my shirt that she may wear the clothes of heaven, and I SLEPT with her in her coffin (grave) that I may lessen the pressure of the grave. She was the best of Allah's creatures to me after Abu Talib." The prophet was referring to his Aunt Fatima, the mother of Ali.

Looking at the narration alone one would not notice anything untoward. However, simply looking at the narration's English translation one would find it odd. Sleeping with somebody in a coffin (grave) is an odd occurrence indeed. However, once the context is given, we realise what actually happened.

The Context and Explanation: Firstly the translation of "I slept" does not best convey the meaning based on the context, the Arabic word translated as "I Slept" is Idtaja' (اضطجع). This word can either mean: lie down, lie, recline, repose [3].

I hope you have noticed within the list of definitions (lie down, lie, recline, repose) the word "sleep" (or "sex") does not appear. Lane's Lexicon does indicate it can refer to sleeping too: lay upon his side; or] he laid his side upon the ground; [and simply he lay; and he slept [4]

So, we are left with the question: did Muhammad sleep or lie in the grave? The context explains it all, as it was a grave, we realise the word cannot possibly mean “sleep” but rather it means “lie/lay in the grave”.

This actually makes sense with the other bits of context we have at our disposal; “When the grave was prepared Muhammad himself examined it and placed her into the grave” [5].

Thus, it is reasonable to think the examination procedure also involved Prophet Muhammad lying in the grave. This would not have been at length in terms of duration (time). Therefore, we realize Prophet Muhammad simply laid in the grave to make sure it was comfortable for his deceased foster mother as well as to honour the lady as it would be seen as a fabulous honor to be resting in a place where a Prophet of God had previously laid.

Did Muhammad Lie with his Foster Mother (Fatima Bint Asad) in the Grave?

It does not appear so as the process of investigating/examining the grave would have been PRIOR (before) lowering Fatima Bint Asad (*radhiyallahu anha*) into the grave. Therefore, Muhammad would have reclined in the grave in order to check the grave before Fatima was placed in the grave, thus he would not have lay with her. Furthermore, there were two types of graves in vogue at the time of the Prophet which were *Lahd* and *Shagg* (shiq) [6], [7].

The *Shagg* type of grave is characterized by a niche within the grave for the dead body to be placed within. So it is impossible to lie with the body due to the niche. [8]

The *Lahd* form of grave is characterized by a lateral hollow which is dug into the side of the base of the grave for the body to be placed [8]. This type of grave makes lying with the deceased body risky as the earth could cave in on top of the body and the one who is lying with the deceased.

Thus, it seems the laying in the grave for examination purposes was done prior to Fatima (*radhiyallahu anha*) being lowered into her resting place. This is despite the Arabic phraseology used literally denoting “with”:

اضطجعت معها في قبرها

If Prophet Muhammad did lie with his foster mother whilst she was in the grave in order to check for comfort and honor her before the companions filled the grave it would only have been for a short time and this would have been witnessed by other people too. There is nothing wrong with lying in the grave to ensure comfort for your foster mother and honor; in fact, it was an act of great compassion. Yet, there are people and even those calling themselves Christians who unceasingly criticise Muhammad and falsely accuse him of terrible things. As a mother, I would be horrified if my son mourned my death and someone twisted the event into something dirty.

There are Christian within my own family, but they are all civilised. Many people believe Adolf Hitler was married to his niece and executed six million people but even he does not face the torrent of hatred and curse which many Christians have flung at Muhammad. Are we human or not? Which part of humanity allows one person to belittle and throw heinous allegations against another? Muhammad was a poor and honest man who was grieving bitterly for a mother he had lost, and in his grief, he was not spared the wrath of his haters, who arrived in this world nearly fifteen hundred years after him and belittles him and throws filthy allegations at him.

If we consult *Ahadith* literature we will realise Prophet Muhammad’s PRAYER made the grave a better abode for people (Hadith) through the grace of God. This shows us if Prophet Muhammad seriously felt Fatima Bint Asad was in danger of the punishment of the grave, he would have simply PRAYED for her grave to be a better dwelling.

The one making this odd claim is a Christian and it just goes to reveal his hypocritical nature because the same word (a construct of *Idtaja*) is used in the Arabic Bible and it is not translated as a sinister thing but is translated as “LAID”.

Please also bear in mind the dictionary references (given earlier) which disprove his malicious claims, well the Bible is now disproving him. The same Arabic word is used in the Bible (2Kings 4:32) and it is translated as “laid” and not sex or anything of that nature:

وَدَخَلَ الْيَتَمَّ الْبَيْتَ وَإِذَا بِالصَّبِيِّ مَيْتٌ وَمُنْصَطِّجٌ عَلَى سَرِيرِهِ

English Translation: And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed. (KJV)

This along with the dictionary references shown earlier just further indicates the narration in question has nothing to do with any sinister act.

The word used (Idtaja') simply refers to lying down or sleeping. The meaning of lying down is further highlighted by the context.

The same Arabic word is used in the Bible (2Kings 4:32) and it is translated as “laid” and NOT “sex” or “sleep”.

Bint Asad was the foster mother of Prophet Muhammad. “When Muhammad heard Fatima Bint Asad had died, he immediately went to her house sat beside her body and prayed for her soul.”

Nothing can be sadder for a person than to lose one’s mother. When my mother died, I could not rise from the bed due to grief for one whole week, although I myself was already the mother of six children, and well over fifty at that time, I could not cease weeping and I too lay beside my mother’s grave for many days.

How could someone who calls himself Christian ever speaks of such lies and slander the name of the Muslim prophet, when all Muslims ever do is praise and adore Jesus, often more than their own prophet? Have our hearts become so monstrous and dead that we cannot even honour the dead or dying anymore?

What has happened to our hearts? Those men who speak of such sick lies have no moral or ethics.

No follower of Christ could ever say something so evil about a dying man, and no Christian would ever try to speak of such lies about an orphan who was grieving for his mother.

I am old women, a mother of four sons, and I only think how would I feel if someone spoke like that about my sons. It is scary to see the hatred of people in people? It is as though this hate would make them burn and kill all Muslims and frame other Muslims for it or blame their prophet Muhammad for the atrocities.

How dare they call themselves Christians, because no true Christian would ever speak of such sick falsity about a man like Muhammad, who lived an exemplary life, never killing or abusing anyone and giving his all to charity. Yet, they continue to spew lies about him when half the history against Muhammad is false and made up by liars.

Conclusion

Prophet Muhammad was doing what any loving and caring son should do; that was focussing on the wellbeing of his relative (foster mother and aunt, Fatima bint Asad both in this life and the hereafter).

This heartwarming story of compassion and love for one’s family member is now being hijacked by the debauched and hateful mind of a few who are motivated by hatred and destruction.

Those Christians should be ashamed with themselves; Both Muslims and Christians should be wary of such characters and help fight their misinformation. If you happen to be somebody who dislikes Islam or a supporter of such perpetrators of outrage and dishonesty then I urge you to have a rethink and refrain from supporting such individuals financially as they will ultimately be laughing all the way to the bank at the expense of the truth.

May Allah's peace and blessings be upon Prophet Muhammad and may Allah send more good upon bint Asad.

Aameen

More context: Fatima looked after Muhammad during his youth.

Anas bin Malik says that when Muhammad heard Asad had died, he immediately went to her house sat beside her body and prayed for her soul.

"My dear mother, may God keep you under His Protection. Many times, you went hungry in order to feed me well. You fed me and clothed me on delicacies that you denied yourself. God will surely be happy with these actions of yours. And your intentions were surely meant to win the goodwill and pleasure of God and success in the Hereafter." He gave his shirt to be used as part of her shroud. When the grave was prepared Prophet Muhammad, himself examined it and placed her into the grave. Thus, she was one of the few people whose graves were examined by Muhammad. Fatimah is buried in Jannatul Baqee' cemetery in Madinah, Saudi Arabia.

STONING ADULTERERS IN ISLAM: There is no law in Islam which remotely allows stoning people to death for any crime whatsoever, even fornication and adultery. The Muslim Holy book, Koran, clarifies that no human may be tortured, and there is not a single verse which permits stoning. But the stories about stoning, while the majority are forged, have occasionally taken place in Jewish communities in Arabia, as the Bible orders adulteress to be put to death stoning, and many Jews in Arabia followed the Torah laws when their members were found guilty of adultery.

Abu Huraira was a young man who spent time with Muhammad, and one day, a woman confessed to him that she committed adultery and killed her newborn out of shame, and now she was regretful and wanted to know if she would be forgiven. Abu Huraira immediately declared that her sin was so great that she would never be forgiven, but he later went to the Prophet and told Muhammad what had transpired, and upon hearing about the woman's adultery and infanticide, Muhammad became very upset at Abu Huraira and admonished him for telling the woman her sin could not be forgiven. The Prophet continued to ask Abu Huraira if he had looked into the woman's heart and seen if she was sincere in her repentance, and if not, how could he declare her to be a sinner. Indeed, Muhammad did not chide the woman and told everyone that her repentance was enough to make her sinless and pure. Never did Muhammad or any of his disciples permit anyone to be stoned to death, or tortured in any other way, but it was a lie which was perpetuated by many people who hate Islam. Others genuinely confuse Biblical verses with the Koran and falsely claim that like the Bible, the Koran must also advocate the stoning of women who commit adultery, but nothing could be more wrong. I understand why Bible has hundreds of stoning verses for adultery because fornication causes discord in society, and leads to incest, as fathers may eventually have accidental sexual encounters with an illegitimate daughter. However, there is a possibility the real Bible never had these stoning verses either and it was added by some pagans who wanted to make religion appear cruel. God is not cruel and man is cruel, and they may have created such fake traditions.

It is unfortunate that millions of Christians spend years of their lives criticising Islam and bringing false allegations against Muhammad in order to defile the Islamic religion, but their energy would have been better utilised if only they spent it on redeeming themselves and saving their own Christian brethren who are flocking to pagan and Satanic rituals like wildfire each day. One day we might wake up to see nearly all Christians gone to the Dark side. The people who distorted the Bible tried to distort the Koran as well, and lied mercilessly about Muhammad and accused him of stoning people to death, when he was so merciful that when the law against slavery was revealed, and God stipulated the punishment of cutting the hand of anyone who kidnapped people and sold them into slavery, and one slaver was captured by the Muslims, the Prophet burst into tears and begged them to remove the person from his sight as he could not tolerate seeing a person being punished with amputation even though he was guilty of a serious crime. Such was the condition of Muhammad's tender heart, and yet people lie about him.

I think this point needs reiteration and summarizing so nobody is in any doubt. It is a silly, unfair and false claim to say sex was involved, consider the following:

*The word used (Idtaja') does not infer sex. It simply refers to lying down or sleeping. The meaning of lying down is further highlighted by the context. There is NO way it refers to sex. NO authority would consider it meaning sex. In fact if the narrator wanted to convey the idea of sex/marriage taking place he would have used a totally DIFFERENT Arabic word (i.e. a construct of nikah).

*The same Arabic word is used in the Bible (2Kings 4:32) and it is translated as "laid" and NOT "sex" or "sleep".

*Islam does not allow sex with dead people (already mentioned above). Islam is based on the deeds and actions of the Prophet as well as the Quran. Thus if Muhammad did involve himself in this type of activity it would be allowed within Islam. This just goes to show Muhammad never committed such an act.

*Fiqh (Jurisprudence) tells us it is not allowed to touch the nakedness of the deceased, as most Fiqh is also based upon Muhammad's actions we can realize Muhammad did not touch any deceased body in a sexual manner.

*Fatima Bint Asad was deceased, thus meaning a marriage between Muhammad and her or any subsequent conjugal (sexual) relations would be rejected by Islam

*The burying of a deceased person is a community effort thus Muhammad would not have been alone whilst at the grave side. Thus it would be absurd to suggest somebody had sex with a deceased woman whilst everybody sat and watched

* Prophet Muhammad's enemies would have mentioned it and used it against him if he did commit such an act. Prophet Muhammad's enemies never accused him of necrophilia. This further shows this allegation of necrophilia is false and baseless.

*As we have already mentioned, the dictionary references do not indicate sex but lying down/sleeping (the context of which simply refers to lying down). These references are further strengthened by the context.

*Also, the two grave types (Lahd/Shaqq) would physically render the grave as unsuitable for sex.

*The body of the deceased is meant to be handled with care [10] so much so that a bone of the body must not be broken. Of course it goes without saying this would mean sex would be out of the question.

*Fatima bint Asad was the foster mother of Prophet Muhammad. "When Muhammad heard Fatima Bint Asad had died, he immediately went to her house sat beside her body and prayed for her soul"

**When the grave was prepared Muhammad himself examined it and placed her into the grave. Thus, she was one of the few people whose graves were examined by Muhammad". Examination of a grave does involve lying down in a grave but does NOT involve sex.

* It is dehumanizing and a disconnection from reality to believe a world religion of nearly 2 billion will be founded by a man who involved himself in necrophilia

Conclusion

Prophet Muhammad was doing what any loving and caring son should do; that was focussing on the well being of his relative (foster mother and aunt, Fatima bint Asad) both in this life and the hereafter. There was no sex or wrong doing involved.

This heart warming story of compassion and love for one's family member is now being hijacked by the debauched and hateful mind of a few who are motivated by hatred and destruction.

Father Zakaria should be ashamed with himself; this man has a poor reputation in the Arab world, both Christians and Muslims will see him as a man looking for controversy and attention whilst viewing him as a crackpot figure.

I have had some dealings with the English speaking version of Father Zakaria and he, too, is seen as a man motivated by deviance and outright deception. This man's deception extends to making up his own BIBLICAL verses up! (Appendix 2)

Fair people (both Muslims and Christians) should be wary of such characters and help fight their misinformation. If you happen to be somebody who dislikes Islam or a supporter of such perpetrators of outrage and dishonesty then I urge you to have a rethink and refrain from supporting such individuals financially as they will ultimately be laughing all the way to the bank at the expense of the truth.

There is no copyright restriction on this work so feel free to share it in order to further the truth

May Allah's peace and blessings be upon Prophet Muhammad and may Allah send more good upon Fatima bint Asad. Aameen

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8. Ibid. g5.3
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Appendix 1

Rasulullah said, 'When a person is buried and the people go away, two angels approach the deceased and ask three questions, a) Who is your lord? b) What is your religion? and c) Who is he (Rasulullah) ?. A believer will answer all three questions and he will be honoured with the clothing of Jannah. The window of Jannah will be opened for him and he will enjoy the sight of Jannah. On the contrary, a disbeliever will express regret at not being able to answer the questions. Upon that, an angel who is blind and deaf is appointed to punish him. Blind so that the angel does not see the punishment and feel mercy and deaf so that the punishment is not heard. The hammer used to punish a disbeliever is so heavy that it can reduce a mountain to dust. The disbeliever screams with pain and every creation can hear him besides human and Jinns.' (Mishkat)

Rasulullah said, 'The grave is a garden of paradise or a pit of hell.' (Ibid)

http://www.albalagh.net/qa/punishment_in_grave.shtml

Appendix 2

The English speaking version of Father Zakaria makes up his own Biblical verse in order to fit in with a strange "mathematical code" idea:

<http://yahyasnow.wordpress.com/2010/07/15/code-of-quran-prove-christ/>

Such is the disrespect for the truth people of this nature possess.

Appendix 3

Narrated Abu Huraira ®: Regarding the story of a woman who used to sweep the mosque. The Prophet (S) asked about her and they (the Companions) told him she had died. He (S) then said, "why did you not inform me?" and it appeared as if they had considered her as of little importance. He (S) said, "show me her grave", and when they did so he prayed on her. And Muslim added : He (S) then said, "these graves are full of darkness for their occupants, but Allah will illuminate them (the graves) for them (the occupants) because of my prayer on them".

Appendix 4

Another example of Muhammad caring for people in the grave

Narrated Ibn 'Abbas: The Prophet once passed by two graves and said, "These two persons are being tortured not for a major sin (to avoid). One of them never saved himself from being soiled with his urine, while the other used to go about with calumnies (to make enmity between friends)." The Prophet then took a green leaf of a date-palm tree, split it into (pieces) and fixed one on each grave. They said, "O Allah's Apostle! Why have you done so?" He replied, "I hope that their punishment might be lessened till these (the pieces of the leaf) become dry." (See the foot-note of Hadith 215). (217)

Narrated Ibn 'Abbas: Once the Prophet, while passing through one of the grave-yards of Medina or Mecca heard the voices of two persons who were being tortured in their graves. The Prophet said, "These two persons are being tortured not for a major sin (to avoid)." The Prophet then added, "Yes! (they are being tortured for a major sin). Indeed, one of them never saved himself from being soiled with his urine while the other used to go about with calumnies (to make enmity between friends). The Prophet then asked for a green leaf of a date-palm tree, broke it into two pieces and put one on each grave. On being asked why he had done so, he replied, "I hope that their torture might be lessened, till these get dried." (215)

Read more:http://www.islamonline.net/servlet/Satellite?pagename=IslamOnline-English-Ask_Scholar/FatwaE/FatwaE&cid=1119503543856#ixzz0ujoshLtE

http://www.islamonline.net/servlet/Satellite?pagename=IslamOnline-English-Ask_Scholar/FatwaE/FatwaE&cid=1119503543856

http://www.searchtruth.com/book_display.php?book=4&translator=1&start=75&number=211

Appendix 5

Claim in full:

(Narrated by Ibn Abbas:

"I (Muhammad) put on her my shirt that she may wear the clothes of heaven, and I SLEPT with her in her coffin (grave) that I may lessen the pressure of the grave. She was the best of Allah's creatures to me after Abu Talib".... The prophet was referring to Fatima , the mother of Ali.

The Arabic scholar Demetrius explains : "The Arabic word used here for "slept" is "Id'tajat," and literally means "lay down" with her. It is often used to mean, "lay down to have sex." Muhammad is understood as saying that because he slept with her she has become like a wife to him so she will be considered like a "mother of the believers." This will supposedly prevent her from being tormented in the grave, since Muslims believed that as people wait for the Judgment Day they will be tormented in the grave. "Reduce the pressure" here means that the torment won't be as much because she is now a "mother of the believers" after Muhammad slept with her and "consummated" the union."

now, i know the same word اضطجع

is used in 2 king:4:32-34

the word

means lay dawn, it doesn't mean he have sex with the boy.

Appendix 6

Lack of authenticity in Kanzal ul Amal

<http://www.ummah.com/forum/showthread.php?242218-Kanz-ul-Amal>

Appendix 7

More context:

Fatima looked after Muhammad during his youth.

Anas bin Malik says that when Muhammad heard Asad had died, he immediately went to her house sat beside her body and prayed for her soul.

"My dear mother, may God keep you under His Protection. Many times you went hungry in order to feed me well. You fed me and clothed me on delicacies that you denied yourself. God will surely be happy with these actions of yours. And your intentions were surely meant to win the goodwill and pleasure of God and success in the Hereafter."

He gave his shirt to be used as part of her shroud. When the grave was prepared Prophet Muhammad himself examined it and placed her into the grave. Thus, she was one of the few people whose graves were examined by Muhammad. Fatimah is buried in Jannatul Baqee' cemetery in Madinah, Saudi Arabia.

ECONOMY IN ISLAM: ISLAMIC REFUTATION OF CAPITALIST ECONOMIC SYSTEM

Economic Justice In Islam

Introduction

Two major economic systems have dominated the world arena in the last 100 years, namely Capitalism and Socialism. Socialism collapsed before the end of the 20th century with a complete failure, and hence will not be a subject in this discussion. Capitalism continues to dominate the entire globe, with different flavors and varieties implemented in different parts of the world. The dissatisfaction of people under socialism, and the accompanying pain and suffering have ended, but been replaced by yet another type of pain and sufferings.

After the collapse of Socialism, Capitalism entered an era of global economy, Globalization, thus impacting most of the people in the world. Therefore, this discussion explores the impact of capitalism on the world and the plight of people in poor and rich countries. On the other hand, it introduces an economic system that the world is yet to explore, understand, and implement. This system is based on Islam.

The Economic System

Economic system is a set of rules and regulations, which define how to distribute the wealth, how to possess it, and how to spend or dispose of it. This system (set of rules) is based upon a particular viewpoint in life, or ideology. Therefore, the economic system of Islam is different from that of Socialism/Communism and that of Capitalism, since each of these systems follows its own ideological viewpoint. For example, the rules of possession and ownership under Capitalism differ from the rules of possession under Socialism, and from those under Islam.

Economic science deals with the production, its improvement, invention and improvement of its means. Economic science, as is the case with other sciences, is universal to all nations and is not associated with a particular ideology. For example, the improvement of production is a technical issue, which is purely scientific, and does not depend on a particular ideological viewpoint.

In addition to the essential understanding of the difference between the economic system and economic science, it is critical to understand the factors of success for any system. The success or failure of an economic system is measured by the direct impact on the humans who live under it. Measures of such impact are the level of security provided and satisfaction of needs. Security and satisfaction of needs are further measured in terms of:

Food security

Health security

Educational security

Conviction and trust in the economic foundation

In the next section we will address Capitalism as the dominating economic system today, its truth, reality, applicability and consequences.

The Capitalist Economic System

Theoretical Foundation

Capitalism addresses the materialistic side of life; it addresses the human needs and the means of satisfying those needs. It is established on three principles:

1. Relative scarcity of goods in relation to needs.
2. The economic value of a product

3. Pricing role in production, consumption, and distribution.

Relative Scarcity:

Man has needs that require satisfaction. Capitalism views the human needs as purely materialistic, such as the need for food, clothing, medicine, education, and security. As for the moral needs such as pride and honor, or spiritual needs such as the sanctification of God's will, they are not recognized economically, and are therefore disregarded and have no place in economic studies within the capitalist system.

The capitalist looks at the means of satisfaction, that is, the commodities and services, from the viewpoint that they satisfy a need, without taking any other factor into consideration. This system considers, for example, wine as an economically beneficial product because it satisfies the need of some, and perceives the wine maker as service provider. Because wine and wine providers satisfy a need it is considered as having an economic value. Since the need in the capitalist view means a desire, then anything desired, whether it is essential or not essential, beneficial or harmful, it is considered economically beneficial. Products may be considered beneficial from an economic viewpoint even if the public opinion considers them of no benefit, or even harmful. Thus wine, tobacco, drugs, guns, and apples are beneficial things since there are people who desire them. Stocks, interest based loans are also beneficial as long as there is someone who would benefit from their use.

As such, capitalism does not concern itself with the societal values other than materialistic ones. Therefore, the capitalist economic system's primary function is to supply goods – commodities and services – that is, to provide the means of satisfying man's needs, irrespective of any other consideration. Capitalism recognizes that man has basic needs, which must be satisfied, and wants which increase in number as man proceeds to a higher level of urbanization.

Relative scarcity foresees the economic problem as the relative shortages of commodities and services towards the unlimited and constantly growing human needs (wants). This basic principle of capitalist economic philosophy provides the basis for the definition of the economic problem under capitalism. In particular, the problem that capitalism attempts to resolve is the satisfaction of an ever growing human needs using insufficient resources and means of satisfaction. This is the essence of relative scarcity of products. An economic dilemma that cannot be resolved no matter how much commodities and services are produced, thus setting unrealistic goal to be achieved.

The inevitable consequence of relative scarcity is that the focal point of a capitalistic society is the increase production of products and services. However, the distribution of the products over the needs is fully dependent upon the individual ability to obtain it. It should be noted that in a capitalistic society the problem is to make the resources available so as to satisfy the needs in a society, but not necessarily the needs of every individual. It is not surprising therefore, that the main focus of the economy under capitalism is the increase in the national production emphasized by the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Gross National Product (GNP). Capitalism views economic growth, the increase in GDP and GNP, as the mean of solving the problem of poverty. There are serious flaws in these principles:

1. Correlation between the needs and the means of satisfaction

Under Capitalism, production and distribution are considered to be one major subject. Capitalism holds one view towards the economic science and the economic system without differentiating between them. However, there is a major difference between the economic system and economic science as previously defined. The integration between production of the economic material and the manner of its distribution, is a fundamental fault in the capitalist system which is bound to cause failure in the economy.

2. The human needs are not materialistic only

The reference to the needs, which require satisfaction as being purely materialistic, is wrong, and contradicts the natural reality of human needs. Human beings have moral, spiritual, and ethical needs that require satisfaction, which in turn require commodities or services for their satisfaction.

3. Commodities and services relation to the society

Man is viewed by capitalists as a purely materialistic creature, with no relevance to his spiritual needs, ethical thoughts, and moral objectives. Thus, Capitalism does not give weight to Societal values, except to the materialistic value of the product and its profitability. Cheating in the economic sense is valuable as long as it leads to profitability (Enron and Arthur Anderson). Monopoly is feasible economically, while it can be maintained and supported (Microsoft). Under Capitalism, feeding a poor (wealth distribution) may be done only if it brings a material benefit, such as tax break (non profit organizations). The Capitalist economy focuses on the satisfaction of needs and wants irrespective to the societal values and needs. Societal values and needs are protected as much as it does not limit the individual pursuit of satisfaction.

The exchange of resources and efforts among people creates relationships according to which the structure of the society is formed. Thus, viewing the economic commodity as a mean of fulfilling a need, without caring for the societal values, violates a fundamental rule of society structure. The effect on society should be perceived when considering the economic commodity. Therefore, it is incorrect to consider a thing as beneficial just because there is somebody who wants it, whether it affects the relationships among people or not, and whether it is prohibited or permitted in the belief of the people. Rather things should be considered beneficial if they are really beneficial in respect to what the society should be.

Therefore, it is incorrect to consider alcohol, cannabis, opium, explosives, guns, tobacco and the like as beneficial commodities and to consider them economic commodities just because there is somebody who wants them. Instead, the effect of these economic commodities on the relationships between people in society must be considered when considering the benefit of things i.e. when considering the goods as an economic commodity or not. It is a system fault to look at a product merely as it is, regardless of what the society should be.

4. Poverty of individuals is the main economic problem

Capitalism concentrates on production of wealth more than distribution of wealth. The importance of distribution of wealth to satisfy the needs has become a secondary issue. Therefore, the capitalist economic system main aim is to increase the country's wealth as a whole, and it strives to achieve the highest possible level of production. The achievement of the highest possible level of satisfaction for the members of society is viewed as a result of increasing the national income, the gross national product. In the capitalist view this can be achieved by raising the level of production in the country, and by enabling individuals to acquire the wealth as they are left free to work and produce.

So the economy does not attempt to satisfy the needs of the individuals and to facilitate the satisfaction of every individual in the community, rather it is focused on raising the level of production and increasing the national income. Only then the distribution of wealth among the members of society occurs, by means of freedom of possession and freedom of work. So it is left to the individuals to acquire what they can of the wealth. Everyone strives to get his/her share of the wealth using whatever means, skills, or tools he/she can afford. Whether the individual is or is not able to satisfy his/her needs is not of concern to the economy, as long as the production of goods continues to grow, and the wealth continues to grow.

This is the major principal of the capitalist economy. It is inherently faulty, and contradicts reality and does not lead to an improvement in the level of livelihood for all individuals, and does not fulfill the basic needs of every individual. It does not resolve the issue of poverty for the individuals, despite the massive increase in the production of goods and services.

The hard fact in this reality is that the needs, which require satisfaction, are individual needs. They are needs of particular people such as George, Maria, Hessian, Muhammad, and the like. The fact that the needs of George, for example, are satisfied does not make Maria any better, unless her needs are also taken care of. So these are needs of individuals and not needs for a group of human beings, a group of nations, or a group of people. Therefore, the economic problem must focus on distributing the means of satisfaction for all the individuals of a society. In other words, the distribution of the funds and benefits must reach every member of the nation or people. It is not sufficient to increase the wealth of the group, irrespective of the plight of every individual.

Consequently, the study of the factors that affect the size of national production differs from the study for satisfying all the basic needs of all individuals personally and completely. The subject of study must be the basic human needs of man, as a human being, and the study of distributing the wealth to the members of society to guarantee the satisfaction of all their basic needs while allowing them to pursue the satisfaction of their wants & luxury needs. This should be the subject of study, and should be undertaken in the first place. Moreover, resolving the poverty of a country does not resolve the problem of poverty for individuals. On the contrary, resolving the poverty of the individuals, and the fair distribution of the wealth of the country, motivates all the people of the country to work towards increasing the national income and resolving poverty of the country. Yet, the study of factors that affect the size of production and the increase of the national income should be discussed within the framework of economic science, rather than in the discussion of the economic system.

5. Scarcity of resources is not the problem and human needs are limited

Capitalism views the economic problem, which faces any society to be the scarcity of commodities and services. It claims that the human needs are steadily increasing, and the products continue to be too scarce to satisfy the growing needs of the people. This view is erroneous and in fact contradicts with reality. This is because the needs, which must be met, are the basic needs of the individual as a human (food, shelter, education, health and clothing), and not the luxuries, although they too are sought. The basic needs of humans are limited, and the resources and products, which they call the commodities and services, are certainly sufficient to satisfy the basic human needs. It is possible to satisfy all of the basic needs of mankind completely.

The economic problem is, in reality, the distribution of these resources and services enabling every individual to satisfy all basic needs completely, and after that helping them to strive for attaining their luxuries. The basic needs of man as a human do not increase. Only the luxurious needs that may increase and vary due to higher urbanization.

Practical Implementation

The discussion of the capitalist economic system leads to the conclusion that the implementation of this system over a period of time should lead to a profound poverty and severe dissatisfaction for any society. In this section, we will examine actual data from the contemporary world that lives under the domination of capitalist economic systems. The data shows without any doubt that the theoretical errors of the major economic principals have led to serious failures that cause huge catastrophic effects on a very large number of the population in the world.

Hunger under capitalism

Growing out of a Harvard School of Public Health conference on hunger, The Physician Task Force on Hunger in America was established in early 1984. The major findings and

conclusions of the Task Force include:

Hunger is a problem of epidemic proportions across the nation

Hunger in America is getting worse, not better

Malnutrition and ill-health are associated with hunger

is the result of federal government policies

Present policies are not alleviating hunger in America

Conclusion: Resolution of hunger and poverty require fundamental change at the level of the economic system. Capitalism is designed to produce poverty not to resolve it.

Globalization is the newer form of global capitalism. It is capitalism across nations. Capital flows between nations without serious constraints. Products move from the producing origins to consuming destinations without the feel of borders or national

barriers. Again, the production of resources and wealth increase and multiply. But the impact of the tremendous growth of wealth does not find its way to satisfy the needs of the people. Consider this report on globalization:

“The Scorecard on Globalization 1980-2000: Twenty Years of Diminished Progress”

By Mark Weisbrot, Dean Baker, Egor Kraev and Judy Chen

For economic growth and almost all of the other indicators, the last 20 years have shown a very clear decline in progress as compared with the previous two decades. Among the findings:

Growth:

The fall in economic growth rates was most pronounced and across the board for all groups or countries. The poorest group went from a per capita GDP growth rate of 1.9 percent annually in 1960-80, to a decline of 0.5 percent per year (1980-2000). For the middle group (which includes mostly poor countries), there was a sharp decline from an annual per capita growth rate of 3.6 percent to just less than 1 percent. Over a 20 year period, this represents the difference between doubling income per person, versus increasing it by just 21 percent. The other groups also showed substantial declines in growth rates.

Life Expectancy:

Progress in life expectancy was also reduced for 4 out of the 5 groups of countries, with the exception of the highest group (life expectancy 69-76 years). The sharpest slowdown was in the second to worst group (life expectancy between 44-53 years)..

Infant and Child Mortality:

Progress in reducing infant mortality was also considerably slower during the period of globalization (1980-1998) than over the previous two decades. The biggest declines in progress were for the middle to worst performing groups. Progress in reducing child mortality (under 5) was also slower for the middle to worst performing groups of countries.

Education and literacy:

Progress in education also slowed during the period of globalization. The rate of growth of primary, secondary, and tertiary (post-secondary) school enrolment was slower for most groups of countries.

Globalization and Inequality Among Nations

According to this “old fashioned – three worlds partition” partition, 76 percent of world population lives in poor countries, 8 lives in middle income countries (defined as countries with per capita income levels between Brazil and Italy), and 16 percent lives in rich countries. Now, if we keep the same income thresholds as implied in the previous division, and look at “true” distribution of people according to their income (regardless of where they live), we find

a very similar result: 78 percent of the world population is poor, 11 percent belongs to the middle class, and 11 percent are rich.

Economic health or illness?

The most important index of economic well being under capitalism is the index that monitors the growth of the nation's health as a whole. DOW Jones, NASDAQ, NIKO, NYSE and other indexes monitor the status of the nation's most powerful companies. A steady increase of these indexes does not record, reflect or impact the status of the poor in the nation. In fact, the overwhelming data shows that poverty and hunger persist despite the steady increase of economic indexes over the years. The daily report of the economic indexes prove one more time that capitalism is inherently concerned about the growth of products, rather than the satisfaction of the needs of people.

Virtual Wealth

The obsession of product and wealth growth under capitalism has resulted in the removal of the boundaries between the products and services and money. The monetary system existed in the first place to represent the values of products and services in a mobile transferable format. For centuries, gold and silver provided a solid base for measuring the exchange value of products and services. Under the pressure of growing economic product growth, the US capitalist economists cancelled Briton Woods treaty which establishes a fixed exchange rate for gold, thus making gold one more commodity. The devastating result of this action is the creation of a new environment where wealth has become virtual wealth. By virtual wealth, I mean the growth of money independent of the growth of products and services. The two major factors that lead to the unlimited growth of money are the interest (usury) and stock investments. Interest allows money to grow without the involvement of product and services. The values of stocks increase or decrease quite often based on circumstances, politics, stability, and other factors not directed to the products and services provided by the stock holding company. The phenomenon of DOT.COM in the 1990's is a clear example.

Islamic Economic System

Before nudging in the discussion of the economic systems and their impacts on us as people, I would like to lay down a foundation regarding Islam.

Islamic Sources

Islam is a religion in the sense that it is based on a belief in God (the creator) and in the accountability to God on the Day of Judgment. Islam is also an ideology in the sense that it comprises an ideological foundation and a system of laws for the individual and the society. The Islamic systems cover the political, economic, and social systems. Islam is founded upon the fundamental principal that man, life, and universe are all the creations of the eternal, one and only one God whose main name in Islam is Allah. Allah possesses many attributes, all of which are considered to be eternal and unbounded.

The belief in the existence of God, the Eternal Creator, is a rational process in Islam and an obligation upon the reasoning facility of the human. The belief in God under Islam requires also the belief in all His attributes and functions. Belief in God, as such, requires the belief that there needs to be a channel through which God communicates to the people the means and ways to worship. This channel is what is known as Prophethood and/or the Messenger. Worshipping Allah, under Islam, is the process of following the guidance revealed by God through His Messengers and/or Prophets. Islam considers the belief in the Prophethood an essential principal of Islam. The Prophets include Adam, Ibraheem, Isaac, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Them All) and many others. Islam, as a religion and ideology, is based entirely on what is revealed to Mohammad (God's peace and Mercy be upon him). The revelation to Muhammad (God's peace and Mercy be upon him) has two forms. One form is the Quran, which is the actual word of Allah the creator. The wording and the meanings of the verses are written into

the Quran exactly as revealed to Muhammad (God's peace and Mercy be upon him). The Quran was compiled and completely written during the life of the Messenger Muhammad (God's peace and Mercy be upon him). The other format of the revelation is what is known in Arabic as the "Sunnah" of Muhammad (God's peace and Mercy be upon him). The Sunnah comprises statements, actions, and endorsement of Muhammad (God's peace and Mercy be upon him). The Sunnah is also a revelation from God to Muhammad (God's peace and Mercy be upon him), except that the wording of the Sunnah is left to Muhammad (God's peace and Mercy be upon him). The Sunnah was compiled and authenticated after the death of the Prophet (God's peace and Mercy be upon him) based on written statements and verbal narrations.

For a view to be considered an Islamic one, it has to be validated through the Qur'an and the Sunnah. In this lecture, I will trace the Islamic economic system through the verses of the Qur'an and the statements of the Sunnah.

The View of Islam towards the Economy

Allah created all resources in the world

In the Qur'an, Allah states that all the resources in the world are created by Him, and made usable to the humans:

"It is He who created for you all that exists on earth." [Al-Baqarah: 29]

"Allah is He Who put at your disposal the sea so that the ships may sail by His command, and so as you may seek His bounty." [Al-Jathiyah: 12]

"He put at your disposal that which is in the heavens and that which is in the earth, all from Him." [Al-Jathiyah: 13]

"And We sent down iron, in which is great might, as well as many benefits for mankind." [Al-Hadid: 25]

"Let man consider his food. How We pour water in showers. Then split the earth in fragments. And cause the grains to grow therein. And grapes and fresh vegetation. And olives and dates, and enclosed gardens, dense with lofty trees. And fruits and grazes. Provision for you and your cattle." [Surah Abasa: 24-32]

These examples indicate that technical means of production is left to the people. It is apparent that Islam focuses on the economic system (distribution of wealth) and not economic science (technical production).

Economic Policy in Islam

The economic policy is the objective of the laws, which deal with the management of human basic needs (food, shelter, education, health, security). The Islamic economic policy could be understood from the statement of Prophet Muhammad (God's peace and Mercy be upon him):

"Whom who wakes up secure at home with healthy body and food for his day as if he acquired the whole life".

The Prophet (God's peace and Mercy be upon him) also states:

"Allah breaks covenant with any group of people living in a close vicinity, whereby one of them goes to bed while hungry".

The economic policy in Islam aims at securing the complete satisfaction of all basic needs for every individual, and to enable each individual to pursue the satisfaction of their luxuries. Islam looks at every individual as a human being whose basic needs to be satisfied completely, then it looks to him in his capacity as a particular individual, to enable him to satisfy his luxuries as much as possible.

On the other hand, Islam views the individual as part of a whole society that lives according to certain rules and regulations that have to be taken into consideration. Therefore, the purpose of the economic policy in Islam does

not address how to raise the standard of living in the country without securing the rights for every individual. Nor is it just to provide the means of satisfaction in the society without setting wealth distribution processes.

The Islamic economic objective is achieved through multiple laws and regulations:

First, defining property ownership as being of three kinds:

1. Individual ownership
2. Public ownership
3. State ownership

The individual can own anything except that of what is public property or prohibited materials such as alcohol or pigs. The public owns all minerals of the earth that are not limited by nature such as gold and silver mines, oil fields, natural gas fields, etc. or all things that are publicly shared such as seas, rivers, roads etc. The state owns certain revenues including land taxation called (Kharaj). Such laws allow for fair distribution of wealth and allow the state to provide public services, security, healthcare, education and others.

Second, Islam prohibits any kind of Usury and interest based loans, on the other hand it encourages partnership in different ways (but not Joint Stock Companies) and interest free loans. Also, Islam prohibits monopoly allowing for true competition and opportunity.

Third, Islam obliges each capable person to work, so as to achieve the basic needs for himself and his dependants.

Fourth, through the unique Islamic social structure based around protecting the family, Islam obliges adult males to support their parents once the father is not able to work or passed away. If there are no one in the family who can support then the State Treasury (Bait ul-Mal) has to step in. As such, Islam requires that the individual secure for himself and his dependants the satisfaction of the basic needs i.e. adequate food, clothing, education, medication and housing. Islam then encourages the individual to secure the luxuries of life as much as he can.

Fifth, Islam prevents the government from the imposition of taxes, except in cases of public disasters such as famine, and where the state funds are unable to cover expenses. Tax then is imposed for a limited time and taken only from the wealthy.

Through the combination of spiritual, social and economic drives, the Islamic economic system achieves the right of livelihood for everyone individually, and facilitates the securing of the luxuries.

To achieve the societal values within which the individual lives, Islam sets certain rules and regulation within which the individual is to behave while striving to secure his/her needs. For example, Islam prohibits the production and consumption of wine by Muslims, and it does not consider it an economic material. Islam prohibits the taking of riba (usury, interest, etc.) and its usage in transactions for everyone who holds Islamic citizenship. It does not consider riba as an economic commodity, whether for Muslims or non-Muslims. Islam considers what the society ought to be when utilizing any property.

Islam did not detach the individual from being human, nor the human being from being a particular individual. Furthermore, Islam does not consider what the society ought to be separate from the issue of securing the satisfaction of the basic needs for every individual, and enabling him/her to satisfy the luxuries. Rather, Islam makes the satisfaction of the needs and what the society ought to be, as two inseparable issues. For the sake of satisfying all the basic needs completely, and to enable satisfaction of the luxuries, the economic commodity should be available to people, and it will not be available to them unless they strive to earn it. Provided that there is a system that protects the basic integrity of the human being. Therefore, Islam urges people to earn, seek the provision and strive without the fear of not finding food to eat or secured home to return back to at the end of the day. Islam made striving to earn the provision compulsory upon Muslims thus creating a productive society.

Allah said:

"So walk in the paths of the earth and eat of His sustenance which He provides." [Al-Mulk: 15]

Many traditions came to encourage the earning of property. In one Hadith, the Prophet Muhammad _ shook the hand of Sa'ad ibn Muadh and found his hands to be rough. Saad said: "I dig with the shovel to maintain my family." The Prophet (God's peace and Mercy be upon him) kissed Sa'ad's hands and said: "(They are) two hands which Allah loves."

The Prophet (God's peace and Mercy be upon him) said: "Nobody would ever eat food that is better than to eat of his own hands work."

It was narrated that 'Umar Ibn Al-Khattab (God be pleased with him) passed by some people who were consistently in the Mosque reading the Qur'an (meaning not working). He asked who they were. He was told: "They are those who depend upon Allah (Al-Mutawwakiloon)." 'Umar replied: "No, they are the eaters who eat the people's properties. Do you want me to describe those who really depend upon Allah (Al-Mutawwakiloon)? He is the person who throws the seeds in the earth and then depends on his Lord The Almighty,

The Exalted (Azza wa jall).

Thus we find that the verses and the Ahadith encourage striving to seek provision, and working to earn property, just as they encourage the enjoyment of the property and eating of the good things.

Allah said:

"Say: who has forbidden the beautiful gifts of Allah, which He has provided for His servants, and the things, clean and pure, (that He has provided)?" [Al-A'raf: 32]

"O you who believe! Spend of the good things which you have earned, and of that which We bring forth from the earth for you." [Al-Baqarah: 267]

"O you who believe! Do not prohibit the good things which Allah made halal for you." [Al-Ma'idah: 87]

These verses, and the like, denote clearly that the divine rules (Ahkam Shari'ah) related to the economy, aim at acquiring property and enjoying good things. So, Islam obliged individuals to earn, and ordered them to enjoy wealth that they earned, so as to achieve economic growth in the country, to satisfy the basic needs of every person, and to enable the satisfaction of his luxuries.

However, the economic progress through motivating every capable individual to work, assigning properties to the State and the investing of public property, all are means to satisfy the needs in the best possible manner. The Messenger of Allah (God's peace and Mercy be upon him) said:

"Whosoever sought the life (matters) legitimately (halal) and decently he will meet Allah with his face as a full moon; and whosoever sought it arrogantly and excessively will meet Allah while He is angry at him."

The Prophet also said: "Do you have, son of Adam, of your property except that which you ate and consumed, that which you wore and exhausted, and that which you donated and preserved (for yourself in the hereafter)?"

Allah the Supreme said:

"Don't commit Israaf (spending or going beyond the limits imposed by Islam); surely He (Allah) does not like those who condone Israaf." [Al-A'raf: 31]

Islam made the aim of owning properties a mean towards satisfying the needs and not for the purpose of boasting. It required managing the economy according to Allah's orders and made it obligatory. It ordered the Muslims to

seek the Hereafter and the pleasure of the creator through what they earn and spend by their own will, without ignoring the goods of this worldly life.

Allah said:

"But seek the abode of the Hereafter in that which Allah has given you, and do not neglect your portion of worldly life, and be kind as Allah has been kind to you, and seek not corruption in the earth." [Al-Qasas: 77]

Islam secured the observance of the rules in two ways complementing each other. First, Islam motivated the Muslims to adhere to this economic policy through the fear of Allah (Taqwa). Second, Islam legislated laws which the State implements upon the people.

Allah said:

"O you who believe! observe your duty to Allah and give up what remains (due to you) from riba, if you are (in truth) believers." [Al-Baqarah: 278]

Analysis of the divine rules related to the economy, shows that Islam addresses the issue of enabling people to utilize wealth. Islam addresses the initial acquisition of wealth, its disposal and its distribution amongst the public. The rules that deal with the economy are thus based on three principles:

1. Initial ownership,
2. Disposal of the ownership, and
3. Distribution of wealth amongst the people.

With regard to the issue of ownership, it belongs to Allah, since He is the Owner of all the Dominion (Malik al-Mulk). Allah stated in the texts that property (Maal) belongs to Him.

Allah said: "And give them from the property of Allah, which He gave to you." [An-Nur: 33]

Property, therefore, belongs to Allah alone. However, He has put mankind in charge of property, provided them with it, and has given them the right of owning it.

Allah, the Exalted said:

"And spend from what He put you in charge of." [Al-Hadid: 7]

"O you who believe! observe your duty to Allah and give up what remains (due)"

"And He has provided you with properties and offspring." [Nuh: 12]

Islam also defined three types of ownership (as mentioned earlier):

1. Individual ownership
2. State ownership
3. Public ownership

Through the management of these types of ownership, the economy of both the society and the individuals are completely satisfied.

Zakat and Poverty

Islam has waged a war on poverty by all means. It is the poverty of the individual people that Islam is concerned with, in addition to the poverty of the nation as a whole. Islam has instituted the charity, called in Islam the "Zakat" in a manner that eliminates the poverty altogether. "Zakat" in Islam is a mean of worship. It is one of the pillars of Islam as much as the prayer is. The Islamic system aims at eliminating poverty from the society, rather than managing the poor. One of the companions of the Prophet Mohammad (God's peace and Mercy be upon him) and also one of the Guided Successors of Him, Ali Bin Abi Talib (God be pleased with him) stated:

"If poverty were a man, I would certainly kill him".

Practically, after few years of implementing Islam in the Islamic society, the notion of poverty was gone altogether. It is narrated in history that during the era of the Khalifah 'Umar Bin Abd al-Aziz, there was no single poor person within the Islamic State who would accept the charity of the "Zakat".

In a statement by Prophet Mohammad (God's peace and Mercy be upon him), he says:

"Allah breaks covenant with any group of people living in a close vicinity, whereby one of them goes to bed while hungry".

The Islamic economic system defines the main problem to be solved by the system as the poverty of the individuals. The economic index, thus in the Islamic State, would be the percentage of people who live below poverty line. The economic strength and growth will be measured by the actual well-being of the individuals rather than by the well-being of NASDAQ or DOW JONES. What good would it do to the stomach of a poor person, if the NASDAQ gains or loses points? The Islamic Economic Index is based on the food that is available to each and every human soul in the society.

The Islamic economic system reserves the vital resources of the state for the well-being of the people. One or more companies under Islam for example, will not own the oil fields. The fact that a certain company was able to drill and exploit oil fields in Texas does not give it the right for the oil. The oil exists in fields that go beneath the houses and lands of millions of people. In Islam, the oil belongs to all the people in the state. This is not to be mistaking with socialism that dictates that all means of productions belong to the people. Thus, the Islamic system ensures that the vital resources that belong to the people be actually returned to the people. As such, poverty will never exist in any society that has vital resources.

Usury – Interest – Riba

Islam categorically prohibited the use of money to grow money, i.e., usury. Loans in Islam are given to others and considered a mean of worship. Allah declares that whoever gives a loan (no interest) to another person is indeed giving a loan to Allah. In return, Allah multiplies the reward for the loan giver.

Allah stated:

"Whoever gives a good loan to Allah; and Allah will multiply it to him many folds"

Islamic Economy: Reality

The harsh reality is that Islam as described in the Qur'an and Sunnah has been removed from the real life of the people (Muslims and non-Muslims alike) for almost a century. The Islamic State has been the responsible entity for implementing the Islamic systems during and after the death of the Messenger Mohammad (God's peace and Mercy be upon him). The Islamic Nation continued to function (with ups and downs) until 1924, when Mustafa Kemal of Turkey with the help of western European capitalists managed to abolish the Ottoman Islamic state (Khilafah). Since then, the Muslims and non-Muslims in the entire world have been living under various secular systems, implementing capitalism in the economic life.

Muslims continued to believe in Islam and practice those parts of Islam that pertain to the individual. However, for Islam to produce the results and objectives set forth in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, the full implementation of Islam is necessary. Without full implementation of Islam, the results could be counter productive. As a result of the absence of Islam, the Muslims resorted to national bonds, ethnic traditions and values. Quite often and after decades of intentional misguiding, the Muslims mix their national values, national aspirations, and methods with those of Islam. The truth of the matter though is that Islam was revealed as a set of laws, regulations and systems to guide and manage the behavior of the society as well as the individuals.

The history of the life of Mohammad (God's peace and Mercy be upon him) shows that the objectives of Islam, the resolutions of Islam, and the values of Islam started to materialize only after the establishment of the Islamic State in Medinah, 13 years after the beginning of Islam. In fact, most of the laws, regulations, and systems were not revealed to Muhammad (God's peace and Mercy be upon him) except after his migration to Medinah where the state was established. The laws of the Zakat, riba (usury), ownership, and wealth distribution were revealed after the state was created.

Conclusions

Islam as a religion and ideology needs to be revisited by both Muslims and non-Muslims alike. It is a religion that should be looked at as a continuation of previous religions and inheritor of them as well. As an ideology, Islam should be viewed as one that provides economic, political, and social systems that do not belong to the ideologies of materialism (both capitalism and socialism). After the fall and collapse of socialism, the people of the world resorted to capitalism as their only alternative. The collapse of capitalism is eminent as a natural consequence to its inability to address the human needs in a satisfactory manner. It is the responsibility and the duty of the people of the world to examine Islam with serious and sincere scrutiny, in order to consider it as the only viable alternative to capitalism.

DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH IN ISLAM

Introduction

The distribution of wealth is one of the most important and most controversial subjects concerning the economic life of man, which have given birth to global revolutions in the world of today, and have affected every sphere of human activity from international politics down to the private life of the individual. For many a century now, the question has been the center not only of fervent debates, oral and written both, but even of armed conflicts. The fact, however, is that whatever has been said on the subject without seeking guidance from Divine Revelation and relying merely on human reason, has had the sole and inevitable result of making the confusion worse confounded.

In the present study, we propose to state as clearly as possible the point of view of Islam in this matter, such as we have been able to deduce from the Holy Koran, the Sunnah, and the writings of the "Thinkers" (to use a current idiom) in the Islamic tradition. The time and space at our disposal being short, it would not be possible to discuss the subject in detail so as to cover all aspects. We shall, however, try to set down the essential and fundamental points in a concise but comprehensive manner.

Before explaining the position of Islam on the subject of the distribution of wealth such as we have been able to understand from the Koran, the Sunnah, and the Fiqh, it seems to be imperative to clarify certain fundamentals that have an essential and basic importance with regard to almost every aspect of Islamic economics. Give them whatever name you please call them "the principles of the theory of the distribution of wealth", or its "philosophy", or the "ultimate object" of this theory. In any case, they are certain basic principles which one can derive from the Koran, and which distinguish the Islamic point of view in economics from non-Islamic systems of economy.

The Position of the Economic Question

No doubt, Islam is opposed to monasticism and views the economic activities of man as quite lawful, meritorious, and sometimes even obligatory and necessary. It approves of the economic progress of man, and considers "lawful or righteous livelihood" as "an obligation next to the obligation" that is to say, an obligation of the secondary order. Notwithstanding all this, it is no less a truth that it does not consider "economic activity" to be the basic problem of man, nor does it view economic progress as the be-all and end-all of human life.

Even common sense can suffice to show that the fact of an activity being lawful or meritorious or necessary is one thing, and its being the ultimate goal of human life and the centre of thought and action is quite another. Many misunderstandings about Islamic economics arise just from confusion between these two distinct and separate things. It is, therefore, very essential to make the distinction as clear as possible at the very outset. In fact, the profound, basic, and far reaching difference between Islamic economics and materialistic economics is just this — according to materialistic economics, "Livelihood" is the fundamental problem of man and economic developments are the ultimate end of human life, while, according to Islamic economics, these things may be necessary and indispensable, but cannot be the true purpose of human life. So, while we find in the Holy Koran the disapprobation of monasticism and the injunction to "seek the munificence of Allah" (62:10) while we find the honorific terms like

"the munificence of Allah" for trade and commerce,

"good things" (100:8; 38:32; etc.,), and "what Allah has caused to be your sustenance" (4:4) for possessions,

"the clean and pure things by way of nourishment" (7:31) for food,

"adornments from Allah" (7:31) for dress,

"place of rest" (16:80) for dwellings, we at the same time find an expression like "allurement or delusion" (3:185) for worldly life.

And all these things in their totality have been designated as "ad-Dunyâ" ("the mean") a term which, in its literal sense, does not have a pleasant connotation. Even from the total context of the Holy Koran one can infer the meanness and worthlessness of the thing so designated.

On this particular point, shortsightedness may easily lead one to suspect a contradiction in terms. But, in fact, the secret behind the apparent contradiction is that, according to the Koranic view, all the means of livelihood are no more than just stages on man's journey, and his final destination lies beyond them and that destination is the sublimity of character and conduct, and, consequently, the felicity of the other world.

The real problem of man and the fundamental purpose of his life is the attainment of these two goals. But one cannot attain them without traversing the path of this world. So, all those things too which are necessary for his worldly life, become essential for man. It comes to mean that so long as the means of livelihood are being used only as a path leading towards the final destination, they are, "the munificence of Allah", "good things", "adornment from Allah", and "place of rest"; but as soon as man gets lost in the mazes of this pathway and allows himself to forget his real destination, the very same means of livelihood turn into an "allurement or delusion", into a "trial" (8:28), into a veritable "foe" (64:14).

The Holy Koran has enunciated this basic truth very precisely in a brief verse "Seek the other world by means of what Allah has bestowed upon you" (verse 28:77). This principle has been stated in several others too, but it is not necessary to cite them all before this learned gathering. The writer believes that if this attitude of the Holy Koran towards the economic activity of man and its two aspects are kept in view, it would be very helpful in solving many problems of Islamic economics.

The Real Nature of Wealth and Property

The other fundamental principle which has a great importance with regard to the problem of the distribution of wealth is that, according to the elucidation of the Holy Koran itself, "wealth" in all its possible forms is a thing created by Allah, and is, in principle, His "property". The right of property over a thing which accrues to man is delegated to him by Allah. The Holy Koran explicitly says:

"Give to them from the property of Allah which he has bestowed upon you." (24:33)

Why this should be so has also been explained by the Holy Koran in another place. All that man can do is invest his labor into the process of production. But Allah alone, and no one else, can cause this endeavor to be fruitful and actually productive. Man can do no more than sow a seed in the soil, but to bring out a seedling from the seed and make the seedling grow into a tree is the work of someone other than man. The Holy Koran says:

"Have you considered what you till? Is it you yourselves who make it grow, or is it We who make it grow?" (56:63)

And in another verse:

"Have they not seen that, among the things made by Our own hands, We have created cattle for them, and thus they acquired the right of property over them?" (36:71)

All these verses throw ample light on the fundamental point that "wealth", no matter what its form, is in principle "the property" of Allah, and it is He who has bestowed upon man the right to exploit it. So, Allah has the right to demand that man should subordinate his exploitation of this wealth to the commandments of Allah.

Thus man has the "right of property" over the things he exploits, but this is not absolute or arbitrary or boundless; right is it carries along with it certain limitations and restrictions which have been imposed by the real owner of the "wealth". We must spend it where He has commanded it to be spent, and refrain from spending where He has forbidden. This point has been elucidated more explicitly in the following verse:

"Seek the other world by means of what Allah has bestowed upon you, and do not be negligent about your share in this world. And do good as Allah has done good by you, and do not seek to spread disorder on the earth." (28:77)

This verse fully explains the Islamic point of view on the question of property. It places the following guidelines before us:

- (1) Whatever wealth man does possess has been received from Allah – "Allah has bestowed upon you".
- (2) Man has to use it in such a way that his ultimate purpose should be the other world- "seek the other world".
- (3) Since wealth has been received from Allah, its exploitation by man must necessarily be subject to the commandment of Allah.

(4) Now the Divine Commandment has taken two forms:

- a. Allah may command man to convey a specified portion of "wealth" to another. This Commandment must be obeyed, because Allah has done good by you, so He may command you to do good by another "do good as Allah has done good by you".
- b. He may forbid you to use this "wealth" in a specified way. He has every right to do so, because He cannot allow you to use "wealth" in a way which is likely to produce collective ills or to spread disorder on the earth "do not seek to spread disorder on the earth".

This is what distinguishes the Islamic point of view on the question of property from the Capitalist and Socialist points of view. Since the mental background of Capitalism is, theoretically or practically, materialistic, it gives man the unconditional and absolute right of property over his wealth, and allows him to employ it as he likes. But the

Holy Koran has adopted an attitude of disapprobation towards this theory of property, in quoting the words of the nation of Hazrat Shu'aib. They used to say:

"Does your way of prayer command you that we should forsake what our forefathers worshipped, or leave off doing what we like with our own property?" (11:87)

These people used to consider their property as really theirs ("our property"), and hence the claim of "doing what we like" was the necessary conclusion of their position. But the Holy Koran has, in the chapter "Light" (Surah al-Nur), substituted the term expression "the property of Allah" for the "our possessions", and has thus struck a blow at the very root of the Capitalistic way of thinking. But, at the same time, by adding the qualification "what Allah has bestowed upon you", it has cut the roots of Socialism as well, which starts by denying man's right to private property. Similarly, "thus they acquired the right of property over them" a verse in the chapter "Yâ Sin", explicitly affirms the right to private property as a gift from Allah.

Now we are in a position to draw clear boundary lines that separate Islam, Capitalism, and Socialism from one another:

Capitalism affirms an absolute and unconditional right to private property.

Socialism totally denies the right to private property.

But the truth lies between these two extremes that is:

Islam admits the right to private property but does not consider it to be an absolute and unconditional right which is bound to cause "disorder on the earth".

The Objects of the Distribution of Wealth According to Islam

If we consider the injunctions of the Holy Koran, it would appear that the system for the distribution of wealth laid down by Islam (a sketch of which will be presented later on) envisages three objects:

(a) The establishment of a practical system of economy The first object of the distribution of wealth is that it would be the means of establishing in the world a system of economy which is natural and practicable, and which, without using any compulsion or force, allows every individual to function in a normal way according to his ability, his aptitude, his own choice and liking, so that his activities may be more fruitful, healthy and useful. And this cannot be secured without a healthy relationship between the employee, and without the proper utilization employer and of the natural force of supply and demand. That is why Islam does admit these factors. A comprehensive indication of this principle is to be found in the following verse:

"We have distributed their livelihood among them in worldly life, and have raised some above others in the matter of social degrees, so that some of them may utilize the services of others in their work." (43:32)

(b) Enabling everyone to get what is rightfully due to him

The second object of the Islamic system of the distribution of wealth is to enable everyone to get what is rightfully his. But, in Islam, the conception and the criterion of this right is somewhat different from what it is in other systems of economy. Under materialistic economic systems, there is only one way of acquiring the right to wealth, and that is a direct participation in the process of production. In other words, only those factors that have taken a direct part in producing wealth are supposed to be entitled to a share in wealth, and no one else. On the contrary, the basic principle of Islam in this respect is that wealth is in principle the property of Allah Himself and He alone can lay down the rules as to how it is to be used. So, according to the Islamic point of view, not only those who have directly participated in the production of wealth but those to whom Allah has made it obligatory upon others to help, are the legitimate sharers in wealth. Hence, the poor, helpless, the needy, the paupers, and the destitute they too have a right to wealth. For, Allah has made it obligatory on all those producers of wealth among whom

wealth is in the first place distributed that they should pass on to them some part of their wealth. And the Holy Koran makes it quite explicit that in doing so they would not be obliging the poor and the needy in any way, but only discharging their obligation, for the poor and the needy are entitled to a share in wealth as a matter of right. Says the Holy Koran:

"In their wealth there is a known right for those who ask for it and those who have need for it." (70:24-25)

In certain verses, this right has been defined as the right of Allah. For example, this verse in connection with harvests:

"and pay what is rightfully due to Him on the day of harvesting." (6:142)

The word "right" in these two verses makes it clear that participation in the process of production is not the only source of the right to wealth, and that the needy and the poor have as good a right to wealth as does its primary owners. Thus Islam proposes to distribute wealth in such a manner that all those who have taken a part in production should receive the reward for their contribution to the production of wealth, and then all those too should receive their share whom Allah has given a right to wealth (These two groups of sharers will be discussed in greater detail later on).

(c) Eradicating the concentration of wealth

The third object of the distribution of wealth, which Islam considers to be very important, is that wealth, instead of becoming concentrated in a few hands, should be allowed to circulate in the society as widely as possible, so that the distinction between the rich and the poor should be narrowed down as far as is natural and practicable. The attitude of Islam in this respect is that it has not permitted any individual or group to have a monopoly over the primary sources of wealth, but has given every member of the society an equal right to derive benefit from them. Mines, forests, unowned barren lands, hunting and fishing, wild grass, rivers, seas, spoils of war, etc., all these are primary sources of wealth. With respect to them, every individual is entitled to make use of them according to his abilities and his labour without anyone being allowed to have any kind of monopoly over them.

"So that this wealth should not become confined only to the rich amongst you." (59:7)

Beyond this, wherever human intervention is needed for the production of wealth and a man produces some kind of wealth by deploying his resources and labour, Islam gives due consideration to the resources and labor thus deployed, and recognizes that man's right of property in the wealth produced. Everyone shall get his share according to the labour and resources invested by him. Says the Holy Koran:

"We have distributed their livelihood among them in worldly life, and have raised some above others in the matter of social degrees, so that some of them may utilize the services of others in their work." (43:32)

But in spite of this difference among social degrees or ranks certain injunctions have been laid down in order to keep this distinction within such limits as are necessary for the establishment of a practicable system of economy, so that wealth should not become concentrated in a few hands.

Of these three objects of the distribution of wealth, the first distinguishes Islamic economy from Socialism, the third from Capitalism, and the second from both at the same time. (This point will be discussed in detail later on.)

Having indicated these basic principles of Islamic economy, we would now proceed to a brief exposition of the system of the distribution of wealth which one can derive from the Koran, the Sunnah, and the elucidations of the Muslim jurists (Fuqahâ).

The Capitalist View of the Distribution of Wealth

In order to understand the Islamic point of view fully, it would be better to have a look at the system of the distribution of wealth that is obtained under the Capitalist economy. This theory can be briefly stated like this – wealth should be distributed only over those who have taken a part in producing it, and who are described in the terminology of economics as the factors of production. According to the Capitalistic economics, these factors are four:

1 – Capital – which has been defined as “the produced means of production” (that is to say, a commodity which has already undergone one process of human production, and is again being used as a means of another process of production).

2 – Labor – that is to say, any exertion on the part of man.

3 – Land – which has been defined as “natural resources” (that is to say, those things which are being used as means of production without having previously undergone any process of human production).

4 – Entrepreneur or Organization – the fourth factor which brings together the other three factors, exploits them and bears the risks of profit and loss in production.

Under the Capitalist economy, the wealth produced by the cooperation of these four factors is distributed over these very four factors like this: one share is given to capital in the shape of interest, the second share to labour in the shape of wages, the third share to land in the shape of rent (or revenue), and the fourth share (or the residue) is reserved for the entrepreneur in the shape of profit.

The Socialist View of the Distribution of Wealth

Under the Socialist economy, on the other hand, capital and land, instead of being private property, are considered to be national or collective property. So, the question of interest or rent (or revenue) does not arise at all under the philosophy of this system.[3]

Under the Socialist system, the entrepreneur too is not an individual but the state itself. So, profit as well is out of the question here – at least in theory. Now, there remains only one factor – namely, labour. And labour alone is considered to have a right to wealth under the Socialist system, which it gets in the shape of “wages.”

The Islamic View of the Distribution of Wealth

The Islamic system of the distribution of wealth is different from both. From the Islamic point of view, there are two kinds of people who have a right to wealth:

(1) Those who have a primary right – that is to say, those who have a right to wealth directly in consequence of a participation in the process of production. In other words, it is those very “factors of production” which have taken a part in the process of producing some kind of wealth.

(2) Those who have a secondary right – that is to say, those who have not taken a direct part in the process of production, but it has been enjoined upon the producers to make them co-sharers in their wealth. We shall discuss in some detail these two groups of people who have a right to wealth.

[1] The condition of “proper utilization” has been postulated because it is possible to make an improper use of the forces, and it has been the case under Capitalism. Islam has struck at the very root of such an improper use, and has thus eradicated the unbridled exploitation of private property.

[2] It should be kept in mind that this verse initially concerns the spoils of war which are one of the primary sources of wealth.

[3] Let it be made clear that we are here concerned with the basic philosophy, or theory, of Socialism, and not with its present practice, for the actual practice in Socialist countries is quite different from this theory.

Those who have a Primary Right to Wealth:

As indicated above the primary right to wealth is enjoyed by "the factors of production". But "the factors of production" are not specified or technically defined, nor is their share in wealth determined in exactly the same way as is done under the Capitalist system of economy. In fact, the two ways are quite distinct. From the Islamic point of view, the actual factors are three, instead of being four:

1- Capital – that is, those means of production which cannot be used in the process of production until and unless during this process they are either wholly consumed or completely altered in form, and which, therefore, cannot be let or leased (for example, liquid money or food stuffs etc.).

2- Land – that is, those means of production which are so used in the process of production that their original and external form remains unaltered, and which can hence be let or leased (for example, lands, houses, machines etc.).

3 – Labor – that is, human exertion, whether of the bodily organs or of the mind or of the heart. This exertion thus includes organization and planning too. Whatever "wealth" is produced by the combined action of these three factors would be primarily distributed over these three in this manner: one share of it would go to capital in the form of profit (and not in the form of interest); the second share would go to land in the form of rent, and the third share would be given to labour in the form of wages.

Socialism and Islam:

As we have said, the Islamic system of the distribution of wealth is different from Socialism and Capitalism both. The distinction between the Islamic economy and the Socialist economy is quite clear. Since Socialism does not admit the idea of private property, wealth under the Socialist system is distributed only in the form of wages. On the contrary, according to the Islamic principles of the distribution of wealth which we have outlined above, all the things that exist in the universe are the property of Allah Himself. Then, the larger part of these things is that which He has given equally to all men as a common trust. It includes fire, water, earth, air, light, wild grass, hunting, fishing, mines, un-owned and un-cultivated lands etc., which are not the property of any individual, but a common trust. Every human being is the beneficiary of this trust, and is equally entitled to its use.

On the other hand, there are certain things where the right to private property must be recognized if only for the simple reason that without such a recognition it would not be possible to establish the practicable and natural system of economy to which we have alluded while discussing the first object of the distribution of wealth. If the Socialist system is adopted and all capital and all land are totally surrendered to the state, the ultimate result can only be this – we would be liquidating a large number of smaller Capitalists, and putting the huge resources of national wealth at the disposal of a single big Capitalist – the State -which can deal with this reservoir of wealth quite arbitrarily. Socialism, thus, leads to the worst form of the concentration of wealth. Moreover, it produces another great evil. Since Socialism deprives human labour of its natural right to individual choice and control, compulsion and force becomes indispensable in order to make use of this labour, which has a detrimental effect on its efficiency as well as on its mental health. All this goes to show that the Socialist system injures two out of the three objects of the Islamic theory of the distribution of wealth-namely, the establishment of a natural system of economy, and securing for everyone what rightfully belongs to him. These being the manifold evils inherent in the unnatural system of the Socialist economy, Islam has not chosen to put an end to private property altogether, but has rather recognized the right to private property in those things of the physical universe which are not held as a common trust. Islam has, thus, given a separate status to Capital and to Land, and has at the same time made use of the natural law of "supply and demand" too in healthy form. Hence, Islam does not distribute wealth merely in the form of wages, as does Socialism, but in the form of profit and rent as well. But, along with it, Islam has also put an interdiction on the category of "interest", and prescribed a long list of the people who have a secondary right to wealth. It has thus eradicated the great evil of the concentration of wealth which is an essential characteristic inherent in Capitalism, an evil which Socialism claims to remedy.

Islam and Capitalism

This is the fundamental distinction of the Islamic view of the distribution of wealth which sets it apart from Socialism. It is equally essential to understand fully the difference that exists between the Islamic view of the distribution of wealth and the Capitalist point of view. This distinction being rather subtle and complicated, we will have to discuss it in greater detail.

By comparing and contrasting the brief outlines of the Islamic and the Capitalist systems of the distribution of wealth, we arrive at the following differences between the two:

(1) The entrepreneur, as a regular factor, has been excluded from the list of the factors of production, and only three factors have been recognized instead of four. But this does not imply that the very existence of the entrepreneur has been denied. What it does mean is just this-the entrepreneur is not an independent factor, but is included in any one of the three factors.

(2) It is not interest but profit which has been considered as the "reward" for Capital.

(3) The factors of production have been defined in a different manner. Capitalism defines "capital" as "the produced means of production." Hence, capital is supposed to include machinery etc. as well, beside money and food stuffs. But the definition of "capital" that we have presented while discussing the Islamic view of the distribution of wealth, includes only those things which cannot be utilized without their being wholly consumed, or, in other words, which cannot be let or leased-for example, money. Machinery is to be excluded from "capital", according to this definition.

(4) In the same way, "land" has been defined in a more general way. That is to say, all those things have been brought under this head which do not have to be wholly consumed in order to be used. Hence, machinery too falls under this category.

(5) The definition of "labour" too has been generalized so as to include mental labour and planning.

Let us now go into the details of this discussion. Under the Capitalist system, the most important characteristic of the entrepreneur (which entitles him to profit) is supposed to be that he bears the risk of profit and loss in his business. That is to say, from the Capitalist point of view, "profit" is a kind of reward for his courage to enter into a commercial venture where he alone will have to bear the burden of a possible loss, while the other three factors of production will remain immune from loss, for Capital would get the stipulated interest, Land the stipulated rent, and labour the stipulated wages.

On the other hand, the Islamic point of view insists that the ability to take the risk of a loss should, in reality, inhere with capital itself, and that no other factor should be made to bear the burden of this risk-in other words, the man who wants to invest his money in a certain business venture must take this risk.

Consequently, the Capitalist, in so far as he takes the risk, is an entrepreneur too, and the man who is an entrepreneur is a Capitalist as well.

Now, there are three ways in which capital can be invested in a business venture:

(1) Private business: the man who invests capital may himself run the business without the help of any partners or shareholders. In this case, the return which he gets may be called "profit" from the legal or popular point of view; but in economic terms, this "reward" would be made up of (1) "profit", in as much as capital has been invested, and (2) "wages", as earnings of management.

(2) Partnership: The second form of investment is that several persons may jointly invest capital, jointly manage the business, and jointly bear the risk of profit and loss. In the terminology of the Fiqh, such a venture is called "Shirkat-ul-'Uqûd" or "Partnership in contract".

According to the terminology of economics, in this case too all the partners will be entitled to "profit" in so far as they have invested capital, and also entitled to "wages" in so far as they have taken part in the management of the business. Islam has sanctioned this form of business organization too. This form was common before the time of the Holy Prophet. He permitted people to retain it, and since then there has been a consensus of opinion on its permissibility.

(3) Cooperation of Capital and Organization: The third form of investment is that one person may invest Capital while another may manage the business, and each may have a share of the profit. In the terminology of the Fiqh, it is called "Mudārabat". According to the terminology of economics, in this case, the person who invests his capital ("Rabb-ul-Mal") in the form of "profit will get his share", while the person who has actually managed the business will get it in the form of "wages". But if the person who has been managing the business ("Mudārib") eventually suffers a loss in the business, his labour will have gone to waste just as the capital of the investor has gone to waste.

This form of business organization too is permissible in Islam. The Holy Prophet himself had made such an agreement with Khadeejah before their marriage. Since then there has been a complete consensus of opinion on this too among the jurists of Islam.

Beyond these three forms, Islam does not allow any other way of investing capital in a business.

Money Lending Business

The fourth form of investing Capital which has since ever been practised in non- Islamic societies is the money lending business. That is to say, one person lends out capital in the form of a debt, and a second person puts in his labour; if there is a loss, it has to be borne by labour, but, profit or loss, interest does accrue to capital in any case. Islam has interdicted this form of investment.

"O, believers, fear your Allah, and give up what is still due to you from the interest (usury), if you are true believers. But if you do not do so, then take notice that Allah and His Messenger shall war with you."

(2:279)

The Holy Koran also says:

"Yet if you repent (of usury) you shall have your principal. Do not be unjust to any one, nor should any one be unjust to you." (2:278)

In these two verses, the phrases "what is still due to you from the interest" and "you shall have the principal" make it quite explicit that Allah does not condone the least quantity of interest, that "giving up the interest" implies that the creditor should get back only the principal. Thus, one can clearly see that Islam considers every rate of interest (except zero %) to be totally inadmissible.

In the pre- Islamic period, certain Arab tribes used to carry on their trade with the help of money borrowed on the basis of interest from other tribes. Islam put an end to such transactions altogether. Ibn Juraij says:

"In the pre- Islamic period, the tribe of Banu Amr bin Auf used to take interest from the tribe of Banu al-Mughira, and the Banu al-Mughira used to pay this interest. When Islam came, the latter owed a considerable amount of money to the former."

And further on:

"The Banu al-Mughira used to pay interest to the Banu Thaqif."

Let it be understood that the position of every Arab tribe was like that of a joint company, carrying on trade with the joint Capital of its individual members. So, when a tribe would borrow collectively from another tribe, it would usually be for the purposes of trade. The Holy Koran prohibited even this practice.

Thus, under the Islamic system of economy, if a man wants to lend his money to a businessman for being invested in business, he will have first to decide clearly whether he wishes to lend this money in order to have a share in the profit, or simply to help the businessman with his money. If he means to earn the right to a share in the profit by lending his money, he will have to adopt the mode of "partnership" or that of "co-operation" (will have to bear the responsibility of profit or loss). That is to say, he too if there is eventually a profit in the enterprise, he shall have a share in the profit; but if there is a loss, he shall have to share the loss too.

On the other hand, if he is lending this money to another person by way of help, then he must necessarily regard this help as no more than help, and must forgo all demand for a "profit". He will be entitled to get back only as much money as he has lent out. Islam considers it not only unjust but also meaningless that he should fix a rate of "interest" and thus place all the burden of a possible loss on the debtor.

This discussion makes it clear that Islam places the responsibility of "taking the risk of loss" on Capital. The man who invests capital in a risk-bearing business enterprise shall have to take this risk. Thus while, according to most economists, the essential characteristic of an "entrepreneur" is that he takes a risk, Islam considers it to be in principle the characteristic of "Capital". Thus, under the Islamic system of economy, Capital and Entrepreneur become one and the same, and their share in the distribution of wealth is profit, not interest. But if one were to regard (as some economists do) the essential characteristic of an entrepreneur to be management and planning, then this activity falls under the head of "labour" and to consider it as a separate factor is unnecessary elaboration.

If a man invests capital borrowed on the basis of "debt without interest" and has not made any agreement with the creditor for a "partnership" or "cooperation", the debtor himself becomes then owner of this capital after having borrowed it, and now he invests it in the capacity of a Capitalist. So, he himself shall have to bear the responsibility of loss.

The Difference between Rent and Interest

The foregoing discussion has sufficiently established the fact that Islam considers "profit" and "wages" to be lawful and "interest" to be unlawful. Now we are left with the fourth item namely "rent". Islam considers this too as lawful. But there arises a question in the minds of some men on this point – when taking or giving interest on capital is unlawful because of there being a fixed rate, why should rent on land (which includes machinery, according to our terminology) be lawful, rent also being something fixed?

In order to answer this question, one should first understand that important distinction. The material resources employed in economic operations are of two kinds. On the one hand are those goods which, in order to be utilized and exploited, do not have to be wholly consumed but may retain their form as such while being utilized, e.g., land, machines, furniture, carriages, etc., which can be utilized without impairing their identity. Since such commodities are exploitable in themselves, and the modes of utilizing them are such that the person who takes them on rent does not have to exert himself in the least, while their constant use depreciates them in value, so taking or giving "wages" for the utility yield is quite just and reasonable. It is to these "wages for the utilities provided" that Islam gives the name of "rent".

On the other hand, money is a commodity which has to be wholly consumed in order to be utilized. One cannot derive any benefit from it until one has bought something for this money. So, money is not utilizable in itself. Hence, on the one hand, no matter what the benefit which the debtor wishes to derive from it, he has to spend the money and then to put in his own labour in order to derive that benefit; on the other hand, the value of money does not suffer on account of being used by him. That is why it would be unreasonable to impose a fixed rate of interest on this money. The owner of the money has the free choice either not to lend his money at all or to enter

into a "partnership" or "cooperation" with the person who needs the money. But if he lends the money in the form of a debt, Islam cannot allow him to charge an interest on it according to a fixed rate.

It is on this basis that we have defined our terms like this – the things which are not utilizable in themselves without being wholly consumed would be called "capital"; when they enter into a commercial enterprise as a factor of production, they would be entitled to profit; the things which are utilizable even without being wholly consumed would be called "land", and on account of having participated in the process of production they would receive some part of the wealth in the form of rent.

The Prohibition of Interest and its Effect on the Distribution of Wealth

As the foregoing discussion has made clear, one of the basic differences between the Islamic system and the Capitalist system with regard to the distribution of wealth is that Capitalism allows interest, while Islam forbids it. Now, it would be proper to have a cursory glance at another aspect of the problem too – what are the consequences that follow from the interdiction placed upon interest?

In fact, the prohibition of interest has very far-reaching, beneficial, and profound effects on the whole system of the production of wealth itself. But this discussion would lead us far beyond the subject of this article. So, for the moment, we shall only summarily indicate the effects which Islamic injunctions do have on the system of the distribution of wealth. A very simple consequence of the prohibition of interest is that it produces a balance and uniformity in the distribution of wealth. The necessary characteristic of the economy based on interest is that the profit of one of the parties (i.e., Capital) is assured in a fixed form under all circumstances, but, contrarily, the profit of the other party (i.e. Labor) remains uncertain and doubtful. Big commercial enterprises, no matter how profitable they become, can never be considered immune from risk. In fact, while the "risks" of big business have been decreased because the means of production are available in an adequate measure, they have at the same time been increased by certain external factors. The bigger is the enterprise, the greater these risks are. So, under the Capitalist economy, the balance of the distribution of wealth becomes very unsteady. Sometimes the debtor has to bear severe loss, while the creditor goes on minting money. Sometimes, on the other hand, the entrepreneur earns a huge profit, while the man who has provided the capital gets only an insignificant share from it.

Contrary to it, since Islam prohibits interest, it would in practice allow only two forms of investing capital in the modern world "Cooperation" and "Partnership". Both these forms are completely free from this injustice and imbalance in the distribution of wealth. Under these two forms of investment, if there is a loss, it has to be borne by both the parties, and if there is a profit, both have a proportionate share in it. This mode of investment to a great extent serves as an effective check on the concentration of wealth, which is the greatest evil of the Capitalist economy. Wealth, instead of becoming accumulated in the hands of a few, is so distributed over a very large number of individuals in the society that no injustice is done to anyone. Under the Capitalist system, economy being based on interest, Capitalists come not only to own the greater part of national wealth, but also to control the whole market and to run it in their own selfish interest. As a result of this, the system of "the supply of commodities" and that of "prices" can no longer function in a natural manner, but becomes artificial in so nefarious a way that no sphere of life, from economy, manners and morals to politics, can escape its evil influences.

By prohibiting interest, Islam has struck at the very root of these evils. Under the Islamic system, every one who invests his money has a share in the enterprise and its policy, bears the responsibility of profit and loss both, and thus he is no longer allowed to have his own way in business.

A Doubt and its Clarification

It is necessary to clarify a doubt that may arise here. In discussing the evils of the economy based on interest, we have said that it produces an imbalance in the distribution of wealth, and that one of the two parties in a business enterprise is necessarily affected by it. Some people are quite likely to raise the objection that the man who suffers

a loss in a transaction based on interest, suffers it through his own choice – if he deliberately exposes himself to such risk, why should the law of the Shari'ah interfere with his right to do so?

Even a little reflection would easily solve this problem. A slight acquaintance with the Islamic way of life should be sufficient to bring out the principle that, according to Islam, the mutual consent of two parties does not always justify a certain transaction. If a man is willing to get murdered by another man, this fact would not absolve the murderer of his crime. Even in the case of fornication, which the West in its short-sightedness considers to be a private affair of the individual, mutual consent of the two parties cannot absolve the criminals. The question of the distribution of wealth and economic welfare goes much beyond this. We have already explained, with due quotations from the Holy Koran, that wealth is in principle the property of Allah Himself, and that the ownership He has bestowed upon man is, far from being unconditional and unbridled, subject to certain principles laid down by Allah Himself. That is the reason Islam does not allow the mutual consent of the parties concerned to be treated as a justification for a transaction which Islam regards as intrinsically unjust or which can prove to be detrimental to the collective welfare of society. This is the *raison d'être* behind the strong prohibition, in the tradition of the Holy Prophet (Peace and Glory of God be on him), of (buying grain from the caravans coming from the country-side before they reach a town), of from the country -side through a middle man in the days of famine), of (exchanging grain that is yet in the ears for grain that has already been harvested), of (exchanging fruits on a tree for plucked fruits), and of (taking a fixed amount of grain from the harvest of a land given on lease), in spite of their being based on the mutual agreement of the parties involved. Hence, the mere fact that the parties involved have agreed upon it, cannot serve as a valid justification for a transaction based on interest.

In the early days of Islam, the objection which people bred in the pre-Islamic ways generally raised against the prohibition of interest was this:

"Trade is exactly like interest." (2:275)

The Holy Koran refutes this argument in a concise phrase:

"And Allah has permitted trade, and forbidden interest." (2:275)

It is worth noticing here that, in refuting this objection, Allah the Exalted has not enunciated any principle or purpose of the prohibition of interest, but has, so to say, simply indicated that since Allah has declared trade lawful and interest unlawful, one shall have to abide by this commandment, whether one understands its *raison d'être* or not. Instead of elucidating the justifying principles in this place, the Holy Koran has adopted the mode of authority, which cuts off the very root of all objections to the prohibition of interest.

In short, the prohibition of interest by Islam is the wisest solution of the problem which, on the one hand, eliminates many evils of the Capitalist economy, and, on the other, leaves no need for the adoption of the tyrannical and unnatural economic system of Socialism. This is the middle way which alone can save the modern world from the two extremes of license and servitude, and lead it towards a balanced and equitable economic system. The French orientalist Lou Massignon has said something very pertinent on this point:

"In the conflict between Capitalism and Socialism, only that culture can be assured of a secure and bright future which not only prohibits interest but also makes people abide by this prohibition."

The Problem of Wages

So far we have been able to establish one basic distinction between Islam and Capitalism with regards to the distribution of wealth and this distinction is related to the subject of interest. Now, there is another distinction between the two which one must bear in mind, and which concerns the relationship between the employer and the employee. This would necessitate a discussion of the problem of wages.

The violent reaction against the Capitalist system in the present age is largely an outcome of the conflicts between employers and employees and of the problems arising from the fixation of wages. Since the Capitalist economy is based on the principle of selfish and unqualified private ownership, the relationship of "Supply and Demand" between the employer and the employee is only a mechanical, harsh, and formal relationship which rests on undiluted self-interest. The employer respects the humanity of the employee (labourer) only so far as he is obliged to do so in the interest of his own business. As soon as he no longer feels this obligation, he readily adopts oppressive measures. On the other hand, the employee is interested in the work of the employer and prepared to carry out his orders only so long as his livelihood depends on the employer. The moment this dependence is over, he will unscrupulously shirk his work and even go on strike. This results in a perpetual struggle between the Labourer and the Capitalist, making it impossible for a healthy rapport to emerge between the two.

On the contrary, although Islam does admit the principle of supply and demand as affecting, to a certain extent, the relationship between the employer and employee, yet it has at the same time imposed certain restrictions on the supply as well as the demand of labour in such a manner that their business relationship no longer remains merely mechanical, but becomes almost fraternal. As to what should the attitude of the employer be towards the employee, the Holy Koran has made it quite explicit in a short but comprehensive phrase, while citing the words of Hazrat Shu'aib (alayhissalaam). Hazrat Shu'aib (alayhissalaam) stood in the position of the employer for Hazrat Musa (alayhissalaam) and said

"I do not desire to lay (an undue) burden of labour on you. If Allah wills, you will certainly find me to be one of the righteous." (28:27)

This verse makes it quite clear that an employer who is a Muslim and whose ultimate goal in life is hence to become "righteous", cannot be "righteous" until and unless he has the desire to protect his employee from the burden of unnecessary labour. The Holy Prophet (Peace and Glory of God be on him) has elucidated this point further in explicit terms:

"Your brethren are your servants whom Allah has made your subordinate. So, the man who has his brother as his subordinate, should give him to eat from what he himself eats, and to wear what he himself wears. And do not put on them the burden of any labour which may exhaust them. And if you have to put any such burden on them, then help them yourselves (in this work)."

Another tradition says:

"Pay his wages to the worker before his sweat gets dried."

The Holy Prophet also said that there are three people who will find him on the Day of Judgement as their enemy. One of these three is:

"The man who employs a worker on wages, then takes the full measure of work from him, but does not pay him his wages."

How solicitous the Holy Prophet (Peace and Glory of God be on him) was about the rights of the labourer can be gauged from a tradition which comes down from Hazrat Ali (God be pleased with him). He reports that before his departure from this world, the last words of the Holy Prophet (Peace and Glory of God be on him) were: "Take heed of the (daily) prayers and of (the rights of) those who are subordinate to you."

In consequence of these injunctions, the labourer was able to receive a dignified and brotherly position in Islamic society, and we find countless examples of this in the history of the Early Period of Islam. One can say with absolute confidence and certainty that it is not possible to safeguard the rights of the labourer in a better way.

On the other hand, Islam has laid down certain other injunctions which bind the employee as well, and has thus made his relations with the employer still more congenial. From the Islamic point of view, the labourer, in

undertaking the responsibility of doing some work for an employer, enters into a contract which he must honor not only for earning his livelihood but also for his felicity in the other world which is his real and ultimate goal. The Holy Koran has this to say on the subject:

"O believers, fulfil your bonds." (5:1)

And further on:

"Surely the best man you can hire is the one who is strong and trustworthy." (28:26)

And still further:

"Woe to those who are dishonest in weighing and measuring those who exact full measure when they receive their due from others, but give less than due when they measure or weigh for them." (83:1)

According to the elucidations of the jurists of Islam (Fuqahâ), the word "tatfeef" (underweighing and undermeasuring) in this verse includes in its connotation even the labourer who receives in full the wages that have been agreed upon, and yet does not give the full measure of work, and employs that portion of time which he has given away to the employer in doing some other work, contrary to the wishes of his employer. These injunctions, thus, declare the shirking of work to be a great sin, and make it quite clear to the employee that once he has taken upon himself the responsibility of doing some work for an employer, the work has now become his own, and that he is under the obligation to complete it with perfect honesty, application, and zeal, otherwise he will not be able to attain the felicity in the other world which is his real and ultimate goal.

With regard to the problem of wages, in short, Islam, while admitting to a certain extent the principle of "supply and demand" has at the same time laid down certain injunctions for the employer and the employee both, so that the system of supply and demand has come to be based on human sympathy and brotherhood, and not on self-interest. One may possibly have a doubt here down that the nature of the injunctions laid by the Koran and the Sunnah in order to control the employer and the employee both, is similar to that of moral precepts, which have no validity from the economic or legal point of view. But such an objection would arise from an improper understanding of the spirit of Islam. One should all the time bear in mind that Islam is not a mere economic system, but a complete code of life in which all the spheres of human life function as inter-related parts of a whole. The attempt to consider any one of these spheres in isolation from others would necessarily produce many misunderstandings. The true aspect of each of these spheres can emerge only when it is given its proper place within the total code of life, and is viewed in this perspective. So, it would not be possible to exclude these so-called "moral precepts" from any discussion of the Islamic economy.

Then there is another distinctive feature of Islam. If one takes a larger view, even these "moral precepts" are in reality legal injunctions, for the reward or the punishment of the other world finally depends on them and it is the reward and punishment which has the fundamental importance in the life of a Muslim. It is just this "Doctrine of the Other World" which has not only given the authority of Law to Ethics, but has also been at the back of "laws" in the technical sense. If you carefully consider the Koranic idiom, you will find that the notions of "fear of Allah" and "solicitude for the other world" are always appended to every legal or ethical injunction. The secret behind it is that, in fact, man can never be made to abide by laws merely out of fear of human force or coercion until and unless "solicitude for the other world" is there to keep a constant watch over each and every action, movement or thought of man. As for that, the several thousand-year-old history of mankind, which has been full of numberless oppressions, inequities and crimes in spite of all the legal imperatives, can easily bear witness to this irrefutable fact. And, in particular, the so-called "civilized world" of today has made it clear like daylight that the speed with which crimes have been increasing is far greater than the speed with which legal machinery is being strengthened to overtake them.

So, the fond belief that the relations between the employer and the employee can be improved with the help of legal provisions is no more than a self-delusion of the worst sort. Its real remedy is only the "solicitude for the other world" and nothing else. And Islam has put all possible emphasis on just truth in this matter.

The modern mind, which has gotten itself entangled in the confusions of the worldly life and has thus lost the capacity to look beyond matter, may perhaps find it difficult to understand this truth. But it is certain that if mankind is at all destined to attain a peaceful existence, it will, after a hundred pitfalls, arrive finally at the truth which the Holy Koran has stressed again and again. The world has already witnessed sufficiently the veracity of this Koranic concept during the time when Islam was really functioning as a system in actual practice. In the history of that period, one would seek in vain for an example of the conflicts between employers and employees which have been upturning our world for some time past. It was just these "moral precepts" of the Koran and the Sunnah which made a practical demonstration of how this problem could be solved in a satisfactory way, and because of which the history of the Early Period of Islam is almost free from the violent disputes and workers' strike of today.

The Secondary Heads of the Distribution of Wealth

So far our discussion has been concerned with those who have a primary right in the distribution of wealth. A significant characteristic of the Islamic theory of the distribution of wealth is that, in order to strengthen the weaker elements of society and to make those who have no work to do capable of useful work, it has prescribed, beside the factors of production, a long list of those who have a secondary right to wealth, and has laid down a regular system for gaining this objective.

In the introductory part of this article, it has already been indicated that wealth is in principle the property of Allah Himself, that He is the real creator of wealth, and it is He who has bestowed upon man the right of ownership over it. Man is, no doubt, the owner of the reward which he gets in return for his endeavour, but it is Allah who, in His grace, gives him the ability to make this endeavour and it is He who has created wealth. So, man is not altogether free to put his property to any use he likes, but is bound by the Commandments of Allah. Man is hence under the obligation to spend this wealth where Allah commands him to spend. This basic idea automatically leads to a second category of entitlement to wealth outside the factors of production that is to say, according to the Islamic point of view every such person is entitled to wealth to whom the primary owners of wealth are bound under an obligation laid on them by Allah to convey it. Thus we arrive at a long list of the secondary heads in the distribution of wealth, under each of which there are persons entitled to a share in wealth.

In laying down these categories, Islam in fact wants that wealth should be given as wide a circulation in society as possible, and that the restrictions that have been imposed on the concentration of wealth through the prohibition of interest should be further extended. It is not possible to give a detailed account of these categories in this short article. We would, however, enumerate them briefly:

(a) Zakât

The first and the widest of these heads is Zakât. The Holy Koran has mentioned this obligation in numerous places along with Salât (the daily prayers). Every person who possesses silver or gold or cattle or merchandise in a certain prescribed quantity and above it is under the obligation to spend, after the passage of one year, a certain part of his possessions on other needy persons. And with regard to the man who does not fulfil this obligation, the Holy Koran has this to say:

"Those who treasure up gold and silver, and do not spend them in the way of Allah give them tidings of painful chastisement, the day this (wealth) shall be heated in the fire of Hell, and their foreheads, their sides, and their backs shall be branded with it. (It will be said to them,) 'This is what you had treasured up for yourselves; now taste of what you were treasuring.'" (9:34-35)

Then the Holy Koran itself has laid down eight items where this Zakât is to be spent. By prescribing eight items of expenditure under the single head of Zakât, the Holy Koran has opened the way to the widest possible circulation of wealth.

The common factor among these items of expenditure for Zakât which entitles a person to receive it is "poverty" and "neediness". And this head (Zakât) is chiefly meant for the eradication of poverty. An indication of how wide the distribution of wealth among the poor and the needy can be made under the head of Zakât, is provided by the fact that the national income of Pakistan was nearly Rs.15,300,000,000 in 1965; now, if we levy Zakât on this national income at its lowest rate (that is 2.5%), it comes to mean that at least Rs. 302,500,000 can be distributed among the needy and the poor annually. One can easily see what a huge amount of money will every year pass from the pockets of the Capitalists to the hands of the needy and the poor, if all the factors of production pay the annual Zakât regularly, and how soon the glaring inequality in the distribution of wealth will thus be done away with.

(b) 'Ushr

Ushr is in fact a form of Zakât which is levied on land produce. But, since human labor is comparatively less involved in this kind of production, the rate of the levy here is 10%, or in some cases 20% instead of 2.5%. This levy is due only on the produce of those lands which, according to the expositions of the Fiqh, come under the special category of 'Ushri lands. 'Ushr is spent on the same items as Zakât.

(c) Kaffârât

Islam has prescribed another regular mode of transmitting wealth to hundreds of individuals in a society and that is the mode of "Kaffârât" (expiation money). If someone breaks his fast during Ramadân without a proper excuse, or kills another Muslim unintentionally, or compares his wife with the back of a female within prohibited degrees of relationship (which amounts to taking an oath not to have connubial relations with her), or breaks a vow after having taken it, he has been enjoined to spend (compulsorily in some cases, and voluntarily in others) some of his wealth over the needy and the poor. This can be done in the form of cash, and also in the form of food or clothes.

(d) Sadaqat ul-Fitr

Besides this, it has been made compulsory for those whose possessions come up to a certain specified quantity that on the occasion of the ïd-ul-Fitr they should, before going to the prayers, distribute among the needy, the poor, orphans and widows, wheat or its price at the rate of 1 3/4 seers per number of the family. Everyone has to pay this sum not only on his or her own behalf, but even on behalf of one's minor children. To make such charity obligatory this condition too is not necessary that the possessions which give rise to the obligation should consist of objects of growth or should have been held for one complete year. So, the sphere of this obligation is even wider than that of Zakât, and it can lead to the greatest possible demonstration of the principle of brotherhood, particularly on the occasion of a collective festivity.

These four categories are intended to distribute wealth among the needy and the poor. Beside them there are two more categories which are intended to provide help to one's relatives and to give them a share in one's wealth. One of them is the category of "Nafaqât" (Maintenance) and the other is that of "Wirâsat" (Inheritance).

(e) Nafaqât

Islam has placed on everyone the responsibility of supporting his close relatives, some of these relatives are such as must be supported in any case compulsorily, whether one is well to do or poor does not matter among such relatives are, for example, one's wife and minor children. Then, there are other relatives who have to be supported only if one possesses the means to do so. The Islamic law provides a long list of such relatives. This injunction gives rise to a very fine arrangement for the maintenance of the helpless and weak members of a family.

(f) *Wirâsat*

The Islamic system of inheritance has a basic importance in the Islamic system of the distribution of wealth. It is not really necessary to expatiate upon the inequity produced in the distribution of wealth by the restricted forms of inheritance. One of the greatest causes of the inequity that is found in Western countries in this sphere is just this, and many economists have admitted this fact.

The system of inheritance that is generally prevalent in Europe is the rule of primogeniture that is to say, all the property of the deceased goes to the eldest son and all the other children are totally deprived of it. Moreover, in certain places, a man can, if he so wishes, dispose of his whole property by will to any person, thus depriving even his male offspring of a share in the inheritance. As a result of this system, wealth gets concentrated instead of being circulated. On the other hand, according to the Hindu code, the male members of the family jointly inherit the property, and the females are totally excluded from inheritance. This is an obvious injustice to women. Moreover, the sphere of the circulation of wealth is even here narrower than what it is under the Islamic system.

On the contrary, the system of dividing inheritance laid down by Islam does away with all these evils. The characteristics peculiar to this Islamic system are as follows:

(a) A long list of inheritors has been prescribed in accordance with the degrees of relationship, because of which the inherited wealth gets a very wide circulation. It should be noticed here that, in order to give a wide circulation to wealth, it could be as well enjoined that the whole inheritance should be distributed among the poor or be deposited in the Bait-ul-Mâl (Public Exchequer). But, in that case, everyone would have tried to spend all his wealth during his own lifetime, and this would have only upset the economy. It is for this reason that Islam has laid down a system which requires that the inheritance should be divided amongst the relatives of the deceased an arrangement which should be the natural desire of the owner of this wealth.

(b) As against all the other systems of inheritance in the world, Islam has given to woman also the right to inherit property. The Holy Koran says:

"There is a share for men from what is left by parents and kinsmen, and there is a share for women from what is left by parents and kinsmen, whether it be little or much and it is a determinate share."

(4:6)

(c) The deceased has not been given the prerogative to deprive a legal heir of his or her share, nor to make any kind of modification in the prescribed share of any heir. This injunction puts a complete end to the possibility of a concentration of wealth resulting from inheritance. The Holy Koran says:

"You do not know which one of them, among your fathers and your sons, is nearer in profit to you. This is the law laid down by Allah." (4:10)

(d) No distinction has been made among children on the basis of priority of birth. An equal share has been allotted to the elder and the younger.

(e) It has been forbidden to make a bequest in favour of an heir, in addition to the prescribed share. Thus, no heir can receive anything from the estate of the deceased over and above his or her own share of the inheritance.

(f) A part of the property can be bequeathed to one who may not be an heir. This also helps in the circulation of wealth, for a part of the property is given away as legacy before the sharing of inheritance takes place.

(g) But a testator cannot dispose of all his property by will. He is allowed to bequeath up to one third of his property, and has no legal right to exceed this limit. This injunction thus serves to avoid that danger of the concentration of wealth which would arise if a man were allowed to dispose of all his property by will. At the same time, it also safeguards the rights of the near kindred.

(g) Khirâj and Jizyah

Beside the above categories, there are two more which require the owners of wealth to pay a part of it to the government of the country- one is "Khirâj" (tribute) and the other is "Jizyah."

Khirâj is a kind of levy on land which is imposed only on those lands which come under the category of Khirâji according to the expositions of the Fiqh, and the government can spend it on community projects. Jizyah, on the other hand, is received from those non-Muslims who are citizens of an Islamic state and the protection of whose life, property, and honor is the responsibility of the state, and also from those non-Muslim states with which peace has been made on the condition of their paying the Jizyah. This sum as well is to be spent by the state on projects of collective unity.

The secondary categories of the distribution of wealth outlined above are only those in which it has been enjoined upon the primary owners of wealth to spend a part of it as a matter of individual responsibility. Besides these categories, there are, in the Koran and the Sunnah, exhortations to spend wealth on the poor and the helpless and for the collective good of the Muslims. Says the Holy Koran:

"They ask you as to what they should spend. Say 'What is left over.'" (2:219)

This verse makes it clear that what is commendable in the eyes of Allah is that a man should not confine himself to spending only as much as he is under an obligation to spend, but should consider it to be a great blessing for himself to give everything that exceeds his own needs to those members of his society who are destitute of wealth. The Holy Koran and the Traditions of the Prophet (are full of exhortations on the subject of "spending in the way of Allah."

The Eradication of Beggary as a Profession

The measures adopted for giving the weaker members of society the right to have a share in the wealth of the rich were at the same time likely to produce another evil in society – that this section of society might become parasitical, and live as a permanent burden on society. In order to check this tendency, the Shariah has subjected these people as well to certain special regulations:

(i) A man who is healthy and physically fit has not been given the right to beg, except under special circumstances. According to the Holy Koran, the commendable quality of the genuine "Fuqarâ" (beggars) is that:

"They do not beg of men importunately." (2:273)

(ii) The man who has the wherewithal for a day has been forbidden to beg.

(iii) A tradition of the Holy Prophet (Peace and Glory of God be on him) condemns begging as a humiliation.

(iv) The man who possesses wealth up to the prescribed quantity has been forbidden to accept charity even without begging.

(v) The poor and the helpless have been persuaded to shun charity, to earn their livelihood through their labour as far as possible, and to look upon hard work as noble.

(vi) Those who possess wealth have been admonished that it is not enough merely to set apart a sum of money for charity – they are also responsible for seeking out those who are really needy and thus genuinely entitled to charity, and for distributing it among them.

(vii) Through the department of moral censorship, provision has been made for the eradication of beggary.

In consequence of the healthy system of the distribution of wealth which Islam has instituted by means of these injunctions, our history offers instances of a state of society where one sought in vain for a man who would accept charity.

Conclusion

These are only some of the salient features of the Islamic system of the distribution of wealth. In this short article, we have not been able to do more than to show a glimpse of this system. But we hope that these scanty observations must have made it clear how the Islamic economy differs from Capitalism and Socialism both, and what its fundamental characteristics are.

ISLAMIC REFUTATION OF COMMUNISM (MARXISM)

Islam does not instinctively respond to Communism (Marxism) nor accept its ideology. Communism does not have a place in the lives of Muslims. Islam is, basically, in such a headlong collision with Communism that the two ideologies never meet. The most significant reason for Muslims' rejection of Communism is that all Muslims believe in Almighty God, the Angels, the divinely revealed Books, God's apostles and the Day of Judgment. Such a strong belief is neither marginal nor accidental. It is true and deep-rooted, unique, genuine and distinctive, a belief which constitutes the dynamic and propelling force of a Muslim's life and projects itself in all matters of life and living, significant and insignificant alike.

The second reason for our rejection of Communism lies in the fact that Islam is a comprehensive religion in the sense that it is not only concerned with life after death, the spiritual or the metaphysics. Islam embraces life in the Here and the Hereafter, the body and the soul, the natural and the supernatural.

The third reason why Muslims reject Communism is that Islam provides far better solutions for all problems and ambiguities of life and living, be they political, social, economic, ideological etc than all other solutions artificially worked out by Communism or any other doctrine.

Communism is in the sense a product of European intellectual reaction to the rigidly narrow interpretation of life and nature that the Christian Church in the Middle Ages had imposed on people. In the midst of acute and irreconcilable conflicts in medieval Europe, things were not harmonized and balanced, and naturally they did not lead to stable results. Europe was in a state of reaction to an existing aberration, and consequently was carried to the opposite extreme. The Church imposed so many restrictions on the mind and all intellectual freedom. The result was an insatiable desire to exercise man's intellectual power paying no heed to the benefit of mankind. The Church waged a severe war against science with the inevitable result that there grew among the people an insatiable hunger for acquisition of knowledge and the accumulation of scientific information so much so that science far exceeded its limited scope and significance and was turned into a man-made god worshiped by many scientists and knowledge seekers. The Church condemned all worldly pleasures and instigated people to live only for the life to come. In response to the Church's overdose of spirituality there was a great thirst for the physical pleasures of life on earth and an obvious neglect and indifference to the Hereafter. The Church belittled and denied the physical aspect of life for the sake of spiritual purification. The inevitable result was an ardent adoration of the matter and a derogatory depreciation of the spirit. Thus Europe began to take long but gradual strides towards overall materialism which was later maximized in communist dialectic materialism.

The Buddhist society is no different from the extremist experience undergone by the European. Present day Buddhism teaches that to attain eternal redemption (Nirvana) it is imperative to give up ALL desires. One may well question the logic in this as we are taught by Buddhism to give up ALL desires to fulfil the desire to attain Nibbana. As a result desire is not annihilated and the desire to attain Nibbana yet remains.

All Buddhists would agree that Buddha's development from infancy through childhood and adolescence to adulthood to the age of 29 to be precise was abnormal. In fact, he is the only person, perhaps in the whole history of mankind, who was deliberately kept away from the fact of suffering until he was 29 years of age. He was kept away from the view of old age, sickness, death and asceticism. And, to make matters worse, this abnormality was supplemented with another abnormality. He was fed up to his throat, so to say, with joys of this world-dancing and singing girls, good food and drink, luxurious clothes, joyful sports, and as pleasant and beautiful an abode and environment as the royal purse could afford. He was, in fact, confined in a cage of happiness! According to the Anguttara Nikaya, a canonical text from the *sutta pitaka*, Buddha himself is reported to have said later about his upbringing.

"Bhikkus (monks), I was delicately nurtured, exceedingly delicately nurtured, delicately nurtured beyond measure. In my father's residence lotus ponds were made; one of blue lotuses, one of red and another of white lotuses, just for my sake.... Of kasi cloth was my turban made; of Kasi my jacket, my tunic and my cloak... I had three palaces; one for winter, one for summer and one for the rainy season. Bhikkus, in the rainy season palace, during the four months of the rains, entertained only by female musicians, I did not come down from the palace".

At the age of 29 he came in contact with the real world-with the fact of suffering which he never knew before, and, what is just as important, with the temporary nature of the joys and happiness which he, up till then, believed to be real and permanent. It was only natural that this should give rise to an abnormal impact of the reality of suffering and the unreality of happiness on the mind of the disillusioned young man. I believe this to be the fundamental psychological explanation for the over emphasis on suffering on which Buddha founded his religion! Buddhism teaches that 'all is suffering' and to be redeemed one has to give up all desires as enumerated above. We would like you to visualize the scenario of whole of or a major portion of mankind choosing to attain salvation (Nirvana) through this method. If the whole of mankind choose this method, the life will come to a stand still and the human race will be wiped off from the face of the earth completely within about 100 years, as no human reproduction will take place from the time of choosing this path, due to annihilation of desire. From these extremist teachings we are observing a very sensuous, atheistic society emerging, having very scant respect for moral values and rejecting all such unnatural and abnormal precepts. Concepts similar to Marxism could easily breed under these circumstances.

In theory and practice, Communism is based on a cluster of hypotheses which are not truly scientifically proven though Communism assumes that it is the first doctrine based on scientific data. The first hypothesis in the Communist theory is that matter is everlasting and imperishable. Communism assumes that matter preceded thought and that thought is but a product of matter. Matter, Communism alleges, is the maker which made everything including man, and that the laws of matter apply to human life. Secondly, there is a certain determinism which Communists believe governs human life: materialistic, economic and historical determinism which is epitomized in dialectic and materialistic interpretation of history. Thirdly, there is the Communist assumption that individual ownership is inconsistent with basic distinctive human nature and that it is, basically and solely, the cause of all conflicts in human life. In order that human life be stabilized and human conflicts be wiped out from the earth, individual ownership should be abolished. Fourthly, Communism predicts that a day will come when people will do without the state and live like angels on the earth only when they fully apply the principle of "From everyone according to his ability, to everyone according to his need".

Let us now discuss briefly each and every hypothesis upon which Communism (Marxism) is based in order to find out how it can fit in genuine scientific thinking.

Communists assume that matter had always been in existence and that it is imperishable. Therefore, they attribute everything to matter on the assumption that the laws of matter are unalterably permanent, stable and inevitable.

From the purely scientific point of view, geologists and physicists are unanimously in agreement that the physical universe has a specific and a definite date of birth. They may disagree on the accurate and precise date on which

the universe, in its physical sense, was created. But they unanimously agree that the universe did really exist at a certain time and did not exist before. Geologists and physicists, out of sheer courtesy to the data of science itself, cannot precisely predict anything about the future-and cannot say definitely the matter is imperishable. If this hypothesis disintegrates and collapses, all dependent hypotheses, theories and applications will inevitably collapse.

Dialectical materialism and materialistic interpretation of history are both based on the concept of determinism which combines materialistic, economic and historical determinism. In the light of and in consistency with this concept, human history falls into five inevitable stages: 1. Early tribal partnership, 2. Slavery, 3. Feudalism, 4. Capitalism and, 5. Communism. Each one of these five stages is inspired by specific material causes. It has its unique economic and social aspects, its own institutions which convey and reflect its basic concepts and ideologies. For Communists, no idea or convictions can be built on non-materialistic, non-economic basis. Ideas and convictions are inextricably linked to the materialistic and economic environment of which they are but faithful reflections. The prevailing ideas and beliefs are always those of the economically dominating social class. These are always sectarian in nature confined to the specific class which has inspired them. The ideas and beliefs will never change unless some material or economic changes take place. To round off these three-dimensioned concept of determinism and Communist philosophy asserts that the world will for ever live in class conflicts until Communism comes along and rids it of inter-class conflicts by the extermination of all classes with the exception of one class only, the proletariat.

We would take up much time and space if we discussed in greater detail these entire concepts one after the other. Let us deal with one case which will, I am sure, blow up at once this collective mass of Communist ideas. The emergence of Islam and its dissemination across vast territorial stretches in the course of centuries will undoubtedly refute all allegations provided by the Communist philosophy with regard to man and matter. We shall then pose the following questions and queries to be answered by the Communist ideology.

Communism asserts that historical changes are determined solely by material and economical factors. Dialectical materialism and the materialistic interpretation of history spring mainly from the materialistic concept of man. But the emergence of Islam was not conditioned by certain traceable economic or material changes in the Arabian Peninsula. Islam carried with it a group of beliefs, ideas, principles and economic, social, political and moral disciplines completely inconsistent with those prevailing in pre-Islamic Arabia and in the whole world at that time. Islam is still distinguished from most of the currently existing disciplines in the world.

What was the material or economic changes that led mankind to the belief in the existence of One God, the Maker and Sustainer of all creation? Islam emerged and flourished in Arabia which was distressingly torn between heathenism, atheism, agnosticism. Even Christianity and Judaism which are still incapable of working out a decisive, unambiguous and clearly intelligible concept of monotheism similar to what Islam presents.

What were the material and economic changes which led to the emergence of a religion that divested the rulers from their long sustained holiness and re-established them as servants of the One and Indivisible God whom people should all worship irrespective of class, colour or race? The religion of Islam ordained that the assumed holiness with which rulers had been invested should no longer exist on both the secular and religious planes. Rulers should not be authorized to fundamentally legislate for their subjects. In fact all mankind are, from the Islamic point of view, unauthorized to devise their legislations. Allah alone, the Lord of the Worlds, is the divine legislator and Law-giver for all mankind and all people are equal before His Law. Allah organizes their rights and duties and enjoins on everyone to abide by them. Islamic law does not permit social distinctions. The entire mankind is a composite body of individuals. Each individual is independent, unique and self-responsible. But all individuals combine into one self-contained, self-sustained, harmonious, loving and compassionate community.

No material or economic change could lead to the emergence of a religion which called for the freeing of slaves either by manumission or 'Mukatabat'. Islam allows a contract to be signed by the servant and his master according to which a certain sum of money is paid by the former to the latter within a limited period of time. When such a

contract is signed the slave is allowed full freedom to do business with whomsoever he likes. If at the expiration of the assigned period the slave could pay the amount of money to his master as agreed upon in the contract signed by them, he should gain his freedom. This procedure is what is called 'Makatabat' in Islam. Islam abolished all sources of slavery that existed on earth with its divine teachings. Slavery by birth, slavery by race, slavery by colour, slavery by poverty.....etc.

No material or economic changes could ostensibly or logically lead to the emergence of a religion which called for the immediate emancipation of women in Arabia where they were looked down upon and maltreated in pre-Islam times. Islam equalized the relations between man and woman in human rights and allowed woman the right to learn, own and sell her property. Islam gave woman the right to approve or disapprove of her marriage and claim divorce if she is not justly, decently and humanely treated by her husband. Islam gave woman other rights which non-Muslim women did not possess except only during the last two centuries after a series of feminist movements and rebellions in which women as well as morals were victimized.

More than one thousand years before the emergence of capitalism, no natural or economic changes could bring fourth a religion forbidding usury and monopoly which were the instruments of enforcing social injustice, human bondage and deprivation. No material or economic change could inspire a religion which bases all human relations: social, political and economic, on moral principles to which the poor and the rich, men and women are equally committed. Muslims, in their relations with their brother Muslims, are fully committed to these moral principles. Also in their relations with non-Muslims, Muslims abide by these moral principles in war and peace. Islam was not revealed for a particular class of people. Islamic concepts, beliefs and morals were not confined to one specific people or class. Islam was revealed to all mankind.

Therefore, we defy all Communist thoughts implied in the second hypothesis to interpret the emergence of Islam in terms of dialectical materialism. Communist determinism, material, economic and historical will inevitably fail to provide a sufficiently convincing and logical interpretation for the emergence of Islam with all its beliefs, concepts, values, principles and social, economic and moral disciplines. Islam thus emerges triumphant over all the determinism of dialectical materialism because it is a God-given religion.

They (the disbelievers, the Jews and the Christians) want to extinguish Allah's Light (with which Muhammed (Peace and Glory of God be on him) has been sent-Islamic Monotheism) with their mouths, but Allah will not allow except that His Light should be perfected even though the Kafirun (disbelievers) hate it.

It is He Who has sent His Messenger (Muhammed Peace and Glory of God be on him) with guidance and the religion of truth, to make it superior over all religions even though the Musrikun (polytheists, pagans, idolaters, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah) hate (it). (Quran 9: 32, 33)

"Invite (all) to the Way of your Rabb (Only God, Cherisher and Sustainer) with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious, for your Rabb knows best, who have strayed from His Path, and who receive guidance" (Qur'an 16:125)

"You are the best of people chosen for mankind because you command righteousness, forbid evil and believe in Allah" Qur'an 3: 110.

Communists (Marxists) assume that individual ownership is not a natural instinct but an accidental novelty in human life attributed solely to material and economic complexities in contemporary life. Early humanity, Communists allege, lived happily in a state of collective ownership and hence suffered no conflicts. When individual ownership appeared inter-personal and inter-class conflicts prevailed in the form of slavery, feudalism and capitalism. The Communism is only a return to the healthy and early life where collective ownership replaces individual ownership. All conflicts based on individual ownership are eliminated in an attempt to achieve the promised (or lost) paradise on earth. Neither science nor experiment can prove the validity or durability of this hypothesis.

In this context I would like to discuss four main points:

- a). There is no evidence that these primitive tribes did not suffer from any conflict, personal or tribal, and that sexual freedom was prevalent among all males and females. It has been proved that conflicts arose sometimes among the young men of the same tribe for the possession of a certain woman who was more beautiful, attractive and sexually appealing to some of them. Conflicts occasionally arose for the leadership of the tribe.
- b). These tribes were in a constant state of war amongst themselves. Tribal wars and invasions were launched for the usurpation of land, arms, women or all. If we contend that individual ownership did not exist among the members of these tribes, inter-tribal wars arose for the possession of land, property, arms, women.....etc. Instead of the individual or the class in recent history, the tribe constituted the unit which owned and fought for sovereignty.
- c). The existence of collective ownership within the tribe is not sufficient proof that the spirit of individual ownership did not exist among the members of the tribe. The apparent non-existence of individual ownership may be ascribed to the absence of anything to owned or destined to be owned by the individual. But with the emergence of something that can be owned by the individual, individual ownership arose. Communists admit that individual ownership arose with the discovery of agriculture. Individual ownership had been latent in the tribal community. It appeared when circumstances became favourable for its emergence.
- d). Practical experiment proved that collective ownership failed to replace individual ownership as incentive to work. The continuous decrease in the production of wheat in the old Soviet Union is an example in point. Russia, prior to Bolshevik revolution, which used to export wheat, began to import from USA, despite the fact that the richest wheat fields in the world are found in the Ukraine in USSR. Wheat production has always been decreasing. This has led Russia to change its agricultural policy and allow a reasonable portion of individual ownership as an incentive to encourage more production of wheat.

With the abolition of individual ownership which Communists believe is the principal and only cause of all conflicts, the Communist block is continually exposed to ideological and political conflicts. Between Trotsky and Lenin, Stalin and Beria, Khrushchev and the members of the Central Committee and the Political Bureau, there were eternal conflicts. Even after the establishment of collective leadership there arose a conflict in which one of their leaders was ousted. Afterwards, emerged a serious conflict between Russia and China for the ideological leadership of the Communist world. Communism thrives on conflicts and is a root cause of all conflicts.

After Gorbachev, emerged a new economic order in Russia and we are witnessing a rapid growth and prosperity due to the open economic policy implemented successfully. China gradually stepped in to the open economic policy of private ownership and has proved to be a tremendous success after years of setbacks. Communism is part of history and does not appear to be a valid currency in any social setup.

Marx gave a public statement about religion when he said that, "Religion is the opium of peoples", Marx may have referred to a particular reality which Europe has witnessed when feudal lords and capitalists used to provoke in the minds and hearts of the working masses a long-desired dream for eternal bliss in the Hereafter to make up for the humiliation and repression inflicted upon them in this world.

Marx made a public statement about religion in general and in all circumstances. We need not discuss Marxian concept of religion but we only mention this fact, that Communism, which considers religion as an intoxicant and opium to all people, is now using more serious intoxicants to divert the minds of the working class into acceptance of hardship, humiliation, suppression and dehumanization.

Now Communists promise unrealizable dreams. They create a dream land to divert the masses from expressing their dissatisfaction with the bitter living conditions they face. From the very outset, Communists used to attract the masses by stimulating and provoking class conflicts among them. They hate religion because it endeavours to

eliminate hatred, envy and anger among all people. Communists used to promise the downtrodden working masses that once Communism became a reality, workers will own their factories and farmers will take possession of their land and capitalism and feudalism will be completely wiped out.

Collective ownership proved to be a big fallacy. No one owns anything in fact, nor does anyone feel this ownership. All are but humiliated slaves. The state is the only master. The state authorities particularly the party leaders, political bureau, central committee, have all the power in their hands. They live in villas, palaces and own luxurious and expensive cars, whereas the proletariats, the working class, in whose name the state authorities' rule, have to toil and work. The working masses are mere cogs in the huge state machinery. They live in poor houses, wear uncomfortable clothes and eat indecent food. In such worsened living conditions, Communism had to use intoxicants to extinguish the flames of rebellion among the working masses, to make the masses tolerate and put up with the social and economic afflictions imposed upon them. Communists assume that the working masses suffer hardship because national production is relatively insufficient to meet the local requirements. If production increases the law of "From each according to his ability to each according to his need" will be fully applied. Communists assume that they live under the heavy pressure of the state and in the tight grip of espionage circles because they have to confront their enemies. Once they crush their enemies, Communists will form a unified universal government which will uphold and spread justice among all peoples and put an end to all forms of humiliation and oppression. Not only that, eventually the day will come when government will not have to exercise its functions. People will live as angels with no conflicts, disputes, prisons, police force, or suppression among them. What a ridiculous dream, what a utopian expectation. With such foolish illogical assumptions and fabrications, Communism appeals to young men and women inside and outside the Communist camp to believe in Marxist philosophy. When they are caught into the net of Communism they will not be able to escape. History tells us that the Hungarians and Czechoslovakians were crushed under Communist tanks when they tried to break off the Communist orbit and regain their freedom. Communist Russia gave Hungarians and Czechoslovakians an unforgettable lesson so that they would never claim their freedom.

Communism states unequivocally that one who owns is one who rules. Hence one rules for his own interests and those of the class to which he belongs. Therefore, he devises and originates all the concepts and beliefs which are compatible with his own interests and the interests of his class. This unmistakably applies to the laws and legislations conceived and introduced throughout the ages. In the age of feudalism feudal lords owned large stretches of land and exercised their own power on the land serfs. They ruled against the interests of the "people" who were but the masses of the land serfs. Capitalists did the same thing. They possessed everything and ruled for their own interests and not for the interests of the working class. Communists raise up a big fallacy when they assume that they are an exception to the rule. They say that Communism has been introduced to fight and defeat all forms of oppression, social, economic, or ideological. The proletariat rule and own everything. Its supremacy is mainly directed to safeguard its own interests against "none" for it will have dissolved and liquidated all other social classes. The proletariats do not rule in the true sense of the word. A group of individuals rule in the name of the proletariat. They crush, oppress and subjugate the proletariat in their capacity as individuals or as the "state" which own, rule and suppress all others. As long as the rulers devise and apply their own legislations, oppression on earth will remain and humanity will remain divided into masters and slaves into the powerful and the powerless into the rich and the poor.

In one case only this rule does not apply. Injustice will be uprooted from the face of the earth if people do not devise and implement their own basic legislations. When the Divine Law of God replaces the man-made law all owners and non-owners, the rulers and the ruled will be subject to the God given Law and all forms of injustice will be ruled out from the earth. This is ISLAM.

Islam is not merely a set of beliefs rooted in the hearts of Muslims though faith constitutes a basic and an indivisible part of it. Islam is a Divine comprehensive system of life in all its aspects, political, economical, social, ideological and moral. Therefore, it is the only religion which actively responds to the requirements of the human

body and soul and of life at large. Faith in God is indispensable for man. Man is naturally and instinctively a worshipper. The difference between one man and another does not lie in that this man is a worshipper and that one is not. The difference lies in that one man worships God Almighty and the other worships something else, an idol, a star, a human being, or even nature. Man may worship his own self, the state, the leader, the political party, an ideology, materials of production, the dollar, or even science, or intellect or the base human instincts. All these are stray forms of worship which will lead man into all indecencies and divert him from his honourable decent human nature. The real worth of man is inspired by the god he worships. If he worships the true God, man will be duly honoured and respected. Allah says in the Holy Quran: "We have honoured the sons of Adam, provided them with transport on land and sea, given them for sustenance things good and pure and conferred on them special favours above a great part of Our Creation") Chapter 17:Verse 70). If man worships another god, he will degenerate himself with his own man-made god and sink into the lowest of the low.

There can be no doubt that Marx founded his theory on the backward industrial situation of the nineteenth century. Workers were in the main manual; they toiled for bread, were greatly exploited and suffered endlessly. Marx could never have anticipated the changes brought about by the scientific and technological revolution of the twentieth century. Workers today enjoy the luxury of sitting at panels with push-button switches, factories are run by computers, and instead of an army of tired workmen, we see comfortable employees protected by many trade unions and social insurance laws (against disability, old age and illness) and having every chance of education and medical treatment. Marx could never have foreseen the flexibility of capitalism and its capacity for developing a new industrial situation in which workers have stakes in the capital, as has happened in many Japanese, Italian, French and British firms. Hence the dissociation of Marxist thought from the reality of our century. Indeed, in the prevailing conditions of today, Marxism may be regarded as reactionary.

All Marx's predictions, based on his dialectical method have proved to be wrong.

Marx has predicted that the Communist Revolution would break out not in a backward society but in an advanced, capitalist, industrial one, such as the British or the German. He was wrong: Communism struck root in a backward, agricultural society, as happened in Russia and China.

He had predicted that the gap between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in capitalist states would consistently grow and that the situation would deteriorate so much that a revolution would break out to destroy the entire capitalist system. In fact, the reverse of this actually occurred in capitalist countries: thanks to a series of reforms and trade unionist activity the gap has narrowed and class differences have diminished, while it is in Communist states that a conflict has broken out and intensified.

Marx had predicted that capitalism would lead to more concentration of money in colossal monopolies, making the rich richer and the poor poorer. What actually happened was that capital has tended to split up through the establishment of joint stock companies and that through inheritance, land ownership also tended to split up naturally.

Marx has predicted that a devastating economic crisis would practically crush the capitalist system following an imbalance between supply and demand, (namely that as a result of extreme poverty the rate of demand and purchasing power of workers would be too low for ever-rising levels of production). However, all economic crises in capitalist countries have so far been temporary. Furthermore, according to Marx's theory of 'surplus value' workers' wages in capitalist countries should merely fulfil their minimum living requirements, but, thanks to new legislation, trade unionist activity and capitalist self-modification, workers' wages in many European countries rose to remarkable levels of affluence, thus entirely refuting Marx's theory.

The most serious flaw in Marxism is, perhaps, that it insists on being a comprehensive system of thought which has an answer to every question and a solution to every problem. He who does not accept this comprehensiveness has no claim to Marxism. Indeed, Marxists believe their worst enemies to be the eclectic-those who accept (or reject it) partially. This rigidity is the weakest aspect of Marxism. In contrast, there is an obvious intellectual flexibility in

capitalist states, as well as an ability to absorb the ideas of their opponents and benefit by them regardless of ideology. Many capitalist states have adopted nationalization in an attempt to defeat the evils of exploitation and monopoly.

For all its ideological fanaticism, Marxism has not been comprehensively applied anywhere. Whenever it came to actual application, 'comprehensive' Marxism has always been rejected, the reason being a basic weakness in Marxism which we may term 'methodological arbitration'.

Such arbitrariness of method as is found in historical materialism, may be illustrated by its very dialectic, based as it is on the idea of a single factor in operation down human history, namely the economic factor, which Marx regards as the root cause of all historical phenomena. This mode of thought has come to be rejected as unscientific. The accepted view today is that we cannot interpret social phenomena in terms of a sole, independent and externally isolable factor; we cannot even regard one factor as principal and another as secondary or subordinate in as much as the relation between cause' and 'effect' is complex and changing. Instead, we may mark out numerous factors which affect one another and observe the changes in this dynamic process, for what may seem principal today may prove to be secondary tomorrow and so on.

The economic factor cannot be regarded as *primum mobile*, there are national, psychological, racial and ideological factors which may play an even greater part in shaping history than the economic.

Because Marx did not find his theory on the evidence of the entire history of man but on that of a few, carefully selected historical stages, the laws which he deduced cannot be valid for a reading of all history; indeed, they cannot be regarded strictly as laws. His materialistic interpretation of history, namely that it had always been production methods and employer-worker relationships that built up the social superstructure (including art and thought and religion), constituted a naïve simplification of many interconnected and highly complex processes. Any modern theory is ineluctably based on multiple factors and the principle of reciprocal causality, so that a given factor may be seen as both cause and effect at once. Thought and invention are likely to introduce changes in methods of production and worker-employer relations but the latter two can hardly produce any system of thought; religion can change social relations while social relations cannot create a religion, as amply evidenced by the birth of ISLAM itself.

Islam was not the creation of a class-based community. It was neither a reactionary religion designed to protect the property of tyrants and oppressors nor a drug to induce the poor to accept their poverty. It called on people to enjoy life in moderation and to fight all forms of oppression and exploitation. Nor was it the result of a revolution in the methods of production and worker-employer relations in Quraish. It was a super structural phenomenon independent of environmental factors. From the start Islam established the principles of equal opportunities for all, a guaranteed and adequate level of income for each citizen and an economic balance between the individual and society. It also introduced a system of private ownership, public ownership, and a guided but free economy. All this was introduced in the Arabian Peninsula at a time when neither production conditions nor employer-worker relations called for any change. Consequently, Islam cannot be seen to have sprung out of a particular economic situation. Thus the historical logic of Marxism is defeated and the materialistic theory that a revolution in the production system and worker-employer relations is followed by a political revolution is utterly defeated.

One of the worst excesses of Marxism is its bestowal of a mythical aura of purity and virtue on the proletariat (the working class), as though they were the 'chosen people' or an alien race of Martians. Today, as a result of a discrepancy in income between skilled and unskilled labour, this class has itself split into two opposed ones. It is not surprising, therefore, that in view of such obvious gaps in the theory and practice of Marxism many writers and politicians who had once adopted it have now turned away from it. Disenchanted with it, many old socialists today criticize and even oppose it. To state in this context that we belong neither to capitalist 'right' nor to Marxist 'left' is not to imply that ours is an ideological mean between the two extremes. Ours is an independent contribution to political thought – all our own. We have rejected the dictatorship of the proletariat and substituted a method

based on the alliance of the working forces of the population, covering all sectors and classes. We do not regard religion as a reactionary force but as a moving force, as a constructive energy and as a progressive thought – more progressive than all available theories.

ISLAM AND SOCIALISM

Islam is a religion, whereas Socialism is simply an economic institution taking finally the form of a state – a Political Institution. Both stand for some purpose – some end. The end or purpose of the latter is the physical and economic welfare of man or, in other words, the total removal or extermination of poverty from all classes of people in the state. The end or purpose of Islam, on the other hand, is the perfection of man in all forms – i.e., the elevation of man to *Insan-Kamil* – a perfect man. What is a perfect man? A perfect man is one who has the best of conduct and character (*Akhlaq*), the best of intellect (*Aql*), the best and finest sense for the appreciation of beauty (*Husn*), and has the best of health, is free from all cares and wants and is consequently the happiest of all creatures. Evidently, the last, physical and economic welfare of man, from the Islamic standpoint, is only an aspect, an element, of the end, but not an end in itself. For Socialism, on the other hand, it is an end in itself, the sole end, to which all other ends must be subordinated. This is the fundamental distinction between Islam and Socialism. But however they may differ, there is one point at least which is common to both, namely, the principle of the eradication poverty and bringing into being freedom from want. But even so the affinity is merely in the principle as such, i.e., in the aspiration to remove poverty, but not in the ways and means or methods devised by each for the achievement of the same. The means and methods adopted by each differ violently and the point at issue, therefore, is, which of the methods is better and more successful in removing the evil of poverty and bringing into being freedom from want? Some maintained the method devised by Socialism are better than those of Islam; others maintain that the two systems are almost identical and can be reconciles; still others maintain that they are essentially different and that the methods devised by Islam are superior to those of Socialism. I agree with the last group of people and maintain the two systems are fundamentally different and that the means adopted by Islam are far more successful than and superior to those adopted by Socialism or any other hypothesis.

I. Socialism starts with the assumption that all men are equal and justice demands that each man should have equal share of the total wealth of the nation; that there should be an equal distribution of it among all and that there should be no distinction between man and man or class and class. But the assumption of the equality of man is erroneous, for all men are “ideally” equal, not “factually” so. Factually, some are weak and others are strong; some are vicious and others are virtuous and so on. If now the stronger and the more capable people, by sheer dint of honest labour, accumulate more wealth than the weaker and less capable people, no institution in the world has any right to deprive such people of their wealth for the sake of equalising them with the inefficient and unworthy people. If yet they are deprived of their honest earnings, as Socialism would have it, this would be gross injustice. Socialism, which starts with the specific object of dispensing justice to all, involves itself in the grossest injustice inconceivable.

II. Socialism further assumes that the richer and wealthier people are necessarily cruel and wicked; and that the wealth they accumulate is earned through callous and vicious means. But is wealth necessarily accumulated by such methods? Many may have earned their wealth through honest and sincere work and to deprive them of their wealth is obvious injustice.

III. Again, all men are equal and there should be an equal distribution of wealth among all, but since the equal distribution of wealth, they maintain, is impossible so long as the institution of Private Property exists, it must disappear. So long, they argue, as each person retains his own wealth for himself, there shall always arise a class of more prudent, capable and tactful people who would earn more than the less capable and tactful people; and once such persons have taken a start, they will go on multiplying their wealth without much effort on their part – by investing and re-investing it in different forms. Of necessity, therefore, must Capitalism and unequal distribution of

wealth result again and again from the institution of Private Property. This institution should be totally abolished and not the individuals but the State should be the owner of all the property. The individual should entrust his all, whatever it may be, great or small, to the State, and the State should be the sole owner of "total Property." There should be thus no "MINE" or "THINE"; all wealth should belong to the State and then the State shall have to distribute it equally among all, thus resulting in complete justice. All will have equal share from the commonwealth of the nation, in which there would be no distinction between the rich and poor and all will be equally well-provided.

But again, this position has the difficulty of its own kind. The efficiency of its own individuals 'singly' and that of the State 'collectively' will suffer considerably on that account. Man is primarily an individual and only secondarily a social being. The more capable must naturally think why, after all, should they work for the sake of others, when their own interests must necessarily suffer; why after all should they add more to their income, when that excess would always be denied to them. Again, man is primarily lazy and seeks play and happiness rather than work and strain. Left to himself, he would never work or strain himself willingly. He works only under the stress of circumstances – not work for the sake of work. Thus, the less capable people in the Socialistic State would naturally think why after all should they strain themselves and work harder, if already their share of the wealth of the nation is secured; why after all should they produce more, when that more would be taken away by the State? Thus, the rich and the poor, the competent and the incompetent, would all lose interest in their work, and society would necessarily become inefficient. The result would be that the total wealth of the nation, as also the share of the individual in it, would go on decreasing from year to year, until a day would come when the share of the individual would reach a point far lower than even what a most incompetent person would have earned, if left to himself. Socialism started with the object of providing sufficient for each and all, but failed to provide even the bare minimum for any. It must give up its first and most fundamental thesis, viz., "The abolition of private property" and its corollary, viz., "all property to be owned by the State."

But even assuming that Socialism does succeed and succeeds a hundred per cent, then, in that case, each and all would be well-fed all right but none would be moral, because the 'giving' in the case of each is not voluntary or out of free-will. There is, indeed, no giving on the part of the individuals, live alone voluntary or involuntary. All property belongs to the State and it is the State that gives to the individual and not the individual that gives to the State. The share of the individual is not so much "given" by the individual to the State, as it is really "taken" from the individual by the State. But morality of an action consists really in "giving" things over rather than be "taken" away from. Thus a Socialistic State in this hypothesis is tantamount to a kingdom of animals in a huge jungle where there is plenty to eat and drink and where each and all are well-fed and properly stuffed, and yet all remain animals in spite of it – animals and not moral human beings.

But one might say that the question of "giving" and giving things voluntarily does certainly exist in a Socialistic State. After all, as Socialists surmise, every individual in a Socialistic State is absolutely free to give his vote to anybody, and once his original vote is freely given, his subsequent acts that follow from it are freely determined. But this is a wrong argument, the original free vote does not necessarily make all subsequent individual acts free and hence moral. I might have freely voted for Mr. X to become a minister but yet it is possible that, subsequently, I might differ with his policy and conduct. If yet I obey his orders, it can be for no other reason than from fear or prudence in which morality has no share. Morality is not a matter of habitual and mechanical action according to certain principles, as Socialism would like it to be. For instance, once you have freely voted for certain principles, you shall have to follow them mechanically, necessarily and compulsorily in all your individual acts, whether you subsequently agree or disagree with them. But morality is quite the opposite of it. It is not a free act once or casually done in life but is a series of free acts ever and ever anew!

1. Generally speaking, Socialism conceives the nature of man essentially as animal, a feeling being, with food and happiness as his sole end in life. But food, wealth and happiness are precisely the things which each man will have for himself and not share with others. Left to feelings and animal impulses as being the standard, we never share

our wealth and happiness with others and never become one with them. Where we share our well-being and happiness with others, it is our reason that bids us to do so and not our feelings or animal impulses. Reason must intervene into the life of man if we are to share our wealth and woe with others and be anything better than an animal. With the dawn of this reason, new demands would be made on us – the demand or yearning to seek the truth, Goodness, beauty and holiness. But this is neither open to Socialism nor does it actually admit it. Hence the materialism and Godlessness of this system. We thus pass to the second thesis of this system.

2. Socialism assumes that the church and Priest who represent God on earth and vicious institutions and they make capital out of it. Here again we are involved in Capitalism which is their foremost duty to destroy. State and Statesmen should thus take the place of the church and the priests. The State should be all in all and nothing besides the State should exist. There should be no God, no Religion side by side with the State to inspire people and to challenge its supremacy.

But let us analyse this argument. From the casual or even wholesale badness of the priests, we are not entitled to jump to the conclusion that Religion itself is bad.

Socialism is not clear on the point that it is precisely from Religion from which all fundamentally human values first originate and then finally culminate in it. Even the economic welfare of man, as described above, would be somewhat impossible without religion. Without religion, society would be something like Hobbe's Kingdom of wolves, where everyone would perennially run at the other's throat and be at war among themselves. All would be destruction and no production. Thus even with Economic Welfare as the end, let alone other yearnings, it is indispensable to retain God and Religion.

Moreover, since all fundamental values originate from and culminate in Religion, it is, at the basis of all Culture and Civilisation. Without it there would be neither Culture nor Civilisation. But even if we presume that some sort of culture and civilisation can exist in spite of it, it will be grossly primitive and unworthy of man. But without a really advanced Culture and Civilisation, no nation has any moral right to Internationalism, as Socialism would have it. Hence again, Socialism would be obliged to abandon yet another thesis of its own, its Godlessness, and that too, if not for itself, at least in the interest of the Internationalism which is the third chief thesis of Socialism.

3. The starting point of Socialism is: All men are equal and therefore there should be an equal distribution of wealth among all. This necessarily leads to Internationalism which consistently followed. If all men are really equal, then not only are all individuals within the same State but also all States and people within the same world, are equal to each other. Hence all States and people should have equal share of the total wealth of the world. But who is to enforce this principle? Who is to be the torch-bearer and pioneer of it? The thought, as such, would not be acceptable to those who may have to suffer on that account. Who could compel America to share its wealth with Arabia, China, Afghanistan, etc? Evidently, this pre-supposes the existence of some one State strong enough to enforce the same thought. But here again we shall encounter the same difficulties as I have stated above. Even if a State that could enforce the thought were to come into being, the giving on the part of the individual States will not be voluntary and hence not moral. Moreover, the total wealth of the world, as also the share of the individual States, is likely to fall from year to year as it will be an involuntary imposition and man does not like it. Besides, the thought of equal distribution is not open to Socialism, for it conceives the nature of man essentially as animal, and as an animal I can never pass from the circle of "my good," "my happiness," to that of "your good", "your happiness." What is impossible as between individuals will be equally impossible as between States. Once this principle of Socialism, namely, that food and happiness is the sole end of man, is accepted, neither the individuals nor indeed the States will part with what is the only and the most valuable thing according to them.

But even assuming that the individual States could well part with their surplus, the case would be no better either from the socialist standpoint. The surplus would not go to the poorer States but to the richest and the strongest of all States. For of all States, this very Socialistic State with its materialistic background, will of necessity lapse into

imperialism and its evils, indeed a worst sort of imperialism, a world-wide Imperialism, a thing which was the starting point of Socialism to fight against and eradicate in all possible forms.

To this one might object that Socialism does not really maintain that the richer States should entrust their surplus to some stronger one in order that it may distribute it among the poorer States. All that it maintains is that every State within its own sphere should have equal distribution among the individuals. But this would defeat the ideal of International Socialism only to be replaced by National Socialism. In any case, it will be simply compelled by the sheer contradictions and inconsistencies to give up one thesis after another until we shall have merely a form without content – a bare principle of the removal of poverty without its original means to work it out. But this simple principle is not peculiar to Socialism. All religions, long before Socialism, had ordained it, and even today many worldly States aspire to realize it in their own way. What I have simply formally stated, is actually proved by the hard facts of life. Already Socialism has permitted private property and has abandoned its Godlessness and Internationalism. Thus it is no more Socialism; at best it is Neo-Socialism. But Neo-Socialism is a new Socialism and is something other than Socialism, is anything but Socialism. If yet you call it Socialism, then it is like the niser's sock, patched up with new threads again and again and over again until not a single thread of the original remains and yet it is the same old sock. This may be true of the sock for all practical purposes but not of ideologies. We now pass on to Islam to see how the problem of the removal of poverty is tackled by it.

Socialism maintains that so long as the institution of Private Property exists, the result would be Capitalism and its consequent evils. But if Private Property is abolished, the result is no better either, for efficiency would suffer and a result would be a considerable decrease in the total wealth of the nation, as also that of the individual. Evidently, we are involved in a sort of conflict or antinomy, for both the positions are right. The problem now is how to resolve this antinomy and how to reconcile this conflict. Islam offers a solution which is quite correct and fair.

Islam assumes that the institution of Private Property is good from the point of view of efficiency that it promotes; but it is bad from the point of view of Capitalism which it encourages. Hence Private Property should be retained as well as abolished in the same breath – retained in order to encourage its efficiency, and abolished in order to discourage Capitalism. But how is it possible to retain a thing at one and the same time? How am I to conceive that the property is mine and yet not mine at the same time? This is possible when the concept "mine" and "not mine" is looked at from different standpoints and this is precisely the attitude which Islam which actually takes towards it. Empirically, factually and actually the property is mine all right, because it is in my possession. Hence it is natural that I should have interest in it and should promote it as much as it is in my power to do so. But transcendentally, rationally and ideally it is not mine and is God's property, because He alone is the ultimate Creator of all things. Hence I should have no hesitation in parting ways with it, if God so desires. Hence also the synthesis of the conflicting thesis and the solution of the antinomy. The institution of Private Property is kept intact without necessarily resulting in Capitalism. The point of efficiency is combined with a set-back to Capitalism in a most harmonious way. This much abstractly speaking. We may now give three concrete illustrations.

Islam encourages the production of wealth (efficiency) and yet discourages the accumulation of the same in the hands of a few (Capitalism). This it does by the institution of the "Law of Inheritance," by forbidding "Interest" and by the injunctions of "poor tax," "almsgiving," "lending without remuneration," "gift," "trust," "the giving of one-third in will to anybody other than legal successors," etc, etc.

(1) The Islamic Law of Inheritance is an immense blow to Capitalism for through it the property of man is divided and re-divided among his successors and even among the remote successors, if there are no immediate ones. In any case, the property cannot remain compact and in the hand of a few in the long run. Thus the property will circulate from person to person until many are benefited thereby; and when many are benefited, the total wealth of the nation also increases.

(2) The abolition of usury is another great set-back to Capitalism. Usury is a vicious institution and it is at the basis of Capitalism. The rich, thereby, gain more and more money without doing "any positive work." In other words, it is

the money that makes money and not the man behind it. It is the mere possession of money that brings money and not the work or toil of the person possessing the money.

In Islam it should be the man himself and not his bare money to make more money – the man and his nerves, tissues, muscles, brain, etc. Thus, there is no room in the Islamic ruling State for the exploitation of the individual by the individual. The individuals would be no longer perennially under debts to money-lenders. Nor would certain States be perennially under debts to other States.

(3) Hence there would be no Capitalism, no exploitation, and therefore no poverty. Thus an Islamic ruling State, when it comes to the task of Internationalism, would never, like Socialism, lapse into Imperialism. خیرات (tithe), زکۃ (alms), صدقات (charity), قرض حسنہ (loan without interest), هبہ (gift), امانت (deposit by way of trust), وقف (bequest), وصیت (endowment), etc, etc., are other such measures which put a ban on Capitalism and restrain it. These institutions prevent the money from being accumulated in the hands of a few, rather it must flow from man to man and class to class in a rapid circulation. This is very nearly the essence of the economic well-being of both the individuals and the State. But one might object that these injunctions were perhaps helpful for maintaining the poor, but can hardly be expected to meet the gigantic demands and requirements of a modern State. This may be right, but nothing can stand in the way of an Islamic governing State either to impose more and more taxes or demand from the individual whatever he could spare for the amelioration of the condition of his brethren. The Qur'anic Verses: "God has purchased from believers their property and their lives in lieu of Paradise" clearly indicates that the wealth and body of a Muslim is purchased by God in lieu of Paradise and can be requisitioned when He so desires.

Further, of all these injunctions زکۃ (tithe) is one form of duty, خیرات (alms), صدقات (charity), قرض حسنہ (loan), هبہ (gift), امانت (deposit by way of trust), وقف (bequest), وصیت (endowment), etc, etc., form another kind of duties. Tithe (زکۃ) is an absolute duty, whereas the others are meritorious duties.

Tithe (زکۃ) is compulsory enforced and collected by the Khalifa in the name of God, whereas the other institutions are not so enforced by the Khalifa. Tithe (زکۃ) is a duty which Muslims have necessarily and absolutely to perform; and its non-observance is a vice, and its observance a virtue. Whereas the other meritorious duties are of a nature that if we do not perform them, our act is not vice, but if we perform them, our action is virtue, indeed, a meritorious virtue – a virtue par excellence. This sort of virtue does not exist in any worldly State or organisation, not even in a Socialistic State. In a Socialistic State there is hardly any room for virtues, leave alone the meritorious ones. It is a wholesale compulsion and whatever you have in excess of your wants will be taken away from you, and you will be left on a par with others – the question of yet giving more., i.e. meritorious duties, not arising at all.

The State is all for Socialism, whereas God is the all in all for Islam. In the former the act of giving is for fear of the State, whereas in the latter it is for the fear of God. Evidently, the latter is moral action, whereas the former is only a legal one. Thus for a Muslim the act of "giving" is not only conducive to feeding others but is also helpful to his own reformation or self-perfection.

But to this, one might object that an action done out of "fear" is non-moral, whether it be for fear of God as in the case of a Muslim, or for fear of the State as in the case of a Socialist. Hence in either case the action is non-moral. But this is a wrong position. There is a radical difference between fear of God and fear of a State, the two being different in kind. The fear of God is a matter of Faith and the fear of State is a matter of "knowledge." The object of Faith if God, who is not a concrete object; is not immediately present before me; it is my Faith in Him, indeed an ایمان بل غیب (faith in the Unknown). Evidently, His Punishment is not imminent, if I do not believe in Him; even His Punishment itself is a matter of Faith. Thus there is no compulsion in Religion, indeed, much more opposite of it. I am free to believe or not believe in God, or even to believe in one notion of God or the other. The Sword of God is not immediately present before me to compel me to believe in Him, or believe in Him one way or the other. That I yet believe in Him in spite of the absence of His punishment, amounts to complete freedom in the choice of my Faith. Thus my faith in God and the consequent fear of Him are both my own creation, are autonomous and there

is no compulsion involved in it. On the contrary, the fear of the State is a fear of a concrete object, which is present before me and its punishment is imminent, if I disobey it. It is the fear of a thing outside me and of an external origin and is heteronomous. It is a thing or person other than myself who compels me to do this or that for fear of his sword present immediately before me. Hence the distinction between the two fears, of which the one is freely chosen, self-created, autonomous and hence the condition of the existence of morality, which the other is not.

In conclusion, I must say that even assuming that Islam does not succeed in exterminating poverty altogether, the case is not likely to be bad either. For the worth or dignity of a man, according to Islam, consists essentially in the character and righteousness of a man rather than in the wealth and riches possessed by him. Thus, the poor in an Islamic governing State will not be looked down upon for the mere fact of poverty, nor the rich would in any way be respected for the mere fact of wealth they possess. The result would be that the rich and the poor would be all alike and shall form one brotherhood. In this brotherhood the rich would have no feeling of superiority nor the poor that of inferiority, so that there will be neither quarrel among the individuals within the State nor war among the States within the world, in spite of the inequality in wealth. All would be peace and peace and a Kingdom of God on earth would be established, in the truest sense of the term. This is precisely what the term Islam means and this is precisely what the Qur'an invites mankind into – a Peace – perfect and universal.

REFUTING THE CHRISTIAN LIE THAT PROPHET MUHAMMAD WAS A RACIST

Introduction

We must first of all know that Allah Almighty in the Noble Quran loves us because of our Righteousness and not because of our race or gender:

"O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other. Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well-acquainted. [The Noble Quran, 49:13]

False Allegation on Prophet Muhammad being racist:

This is a rebuttal to the Islam-haters lies against Prophet. Before we start, it is important to know the following story:

One of our beloved Prophet's best friends was a black Ethiopian from Africa. His name was Bilal Al-Habashi. Bilal (God be pleased with him) used to be the slave of Prophet's Muhammad's Uncle Umayya, who was a Pagan. When one of our Prophet's close companions, Ammar, was caught during the early times of Islam when Muslims used to meet in secret in Makkah, Umayya ordered Bilal to flog him. Bilal refused to accept the order because he heard from Ammar during the little dialog that happened between Ammar and Umayya and some other Pagans that Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Glory of God be on him) said:

"People are as equal as the teeth of the comb." The old Arabic combs had equal in height and width teeth for combing the hair.

When Bilal (God be pleased with him) refused the order, Umayya punished him severely by flogging him on his stomach while he was laying on his back tied with ropes on the very hot sand in the middle of the day in what we call today Saudi Arabia.

When our Prophet (Peace and Glory of God be on him) learned about this, he ordered for Bilal (God be pleased with him) to be bought from Umayya. So Abu Bakr, one of our Prophet's close companions and the first Caliph in Islam went to Umayya and requested to buy Bilal. Umayya refused at first and kept insisting on refusing to sell Bilal.

Abu Baker (God be pleased with him) went as high as 200 Dinars to buy Bilal. This was way too much money at that time. Bilal was immediately set free by our Prophet (Peace and Glory of God be on him)

Later on, when the Muslims migrated from Makkah to Madinah, and the first Mosque in Islam was built, our Prophet (Peace and Glory of God be on him) was Bilal's best friend at that time. He gave Bilal the job to be the caller for the daily prayers, which back then was one of the most honorable jobs to have. Bilal, the black Ethiopian from Africa, was one of the few best friends of our beloved Prophet that we know about from our Islamic History.

Below are their comments and my responses: Here is what they (the Christian liars) wrote:

"Muhammad the Racist against Black people!!

Black skin and Creation:

"Abu Darda reported that the HOLY PROPHET SAID: Allah created Adam when he created him (sic). Then He stroke (sic) his right shoulder and took out a white race as if they were seeds, and He stroke (sic) HIS LEFT SHOULDER and took out a BLACK RACE as if they were coals. Then He said to those who were in his right side: Towards paradise and I don't care. He said to those who were ON HIS LEFT SHOULDER: Towards Hell and I don't care. – Ahmad" (Mishkat ul-Masabih, translated by Karim, v. iii, p. 117)

FROM IBN ISHAQ'S "SIRAT RASULALLAH", translated as, "THE LIFE OF MUHAMMAD" by A. Guillaume, page 243.

"I have heard that it was of him that the apostle said, "Whoever wants to see Satan let him take a look at Nabtal b. al-Harith!" He was a study black man with long flowing hair, inflamed eyes, and dark ruddy cheeks. He used to come and talk to the apostle and listen to him and then carry what he had said to the hypocrites. It was he who said: "Muhammad is all ears: if anyone tells him anything he believes it." God sent down concerning him: "And of them are those who annoy the prophet and say he is all ears, Say: God ears for you. He believes in God and trusts the believers and is a mercy for those of you who believe; and those who annoy the apostle of God for them there is a painful punishment." (Sura 9:61)"

The above doesn't in anyway suggest that black people are destined for hell, nor the sayings come from the trustful resources such as "Sahih Bukhari", "Sahih Muslim" and "Sunan Abu Dawud" volumes! The quotes don't at all come from reliable Islamic resources. I would like to see the above existing in any of the volumes that I mentioned.

Anyone can come up with a book and make up a lie against our Prophet (Peace and Glory of God be on him).

Let's assume for a second that the above Saying is a valid one, even though as I said, it doesn't come from a trustful resource. The Arabic words for "Race" and "Group" are one word, and that is "Jama-aa". The Arabic word "Jinns" could also be sometimes used for "Race", but "Jinns" means more "sex" than "race". Anyway, the Saying above doesn't at all suggest that Africans are going to hell. Islam is never ridiculous to make such a claim. Below you will see how Allah Almighty loves us for our good deeds and righteousness. Our genders and race don't count when judged by Allah Almighty.

Important Note: When Adam was created, no race or gender existed by him. He was every race and gender of Mankind. How can Africans or black people be taken into the offensive consideration if they didn't even exist yet? It is quite obvious that the word "Race" is a mistranslation.

Anyway, the translation above, which it is quite possible that the hypocrites of the Christian liars have twisted it a little bit suggests that a "race" or "group" will be black and the other will be white. In Islam, we are taught that Angels mark bad deeds with "black" points. It is clear that the Saying above suggests that the "black group" will go to hell, and the "white group" will go to heaven.

Important Note: In Islam, we are ordered to shake hands with the right hand, and to enter doors with the right foot. Does this mean that left-handed people are cursed? Of course not! Same thing with black or African people. Islam has no offense toward them.

As we all know, when one burns himself too much, his skin would turn blackish or black. So, this Saying is suggesting that the people of Hell will eventually be burnt and blackened, and the People of Paradise will be lighter.

There is no racism in this Saying! But again, it doesn't come from an Islamic authentic resource anyway!

Many lies had been inserted in history against our beloved Prophet (Peace and Glory of God be on him); "A section of the People of the Book [Jews and Christians] say: Believe in the morning what is revealed to the believers (Muslims), but reject it at the end of the day; perchance they may (themselves) turn back (from Islam). [The Noble Quran, 3:72]"

The above false claims clearly contradict what Allah Almighty said in the Noble Quran in the following Noble Verse:

"O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes [people with different cultures, races and religions], that ye may know each other. Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well-acquainted. [The Noble Quran, 49:13]"

Here is the answer by Abdal Hakim Murad:

"As-salamu alaykum. The key text is Qur'an 49.13, 'and created you peoples and tribes that you might know each other. The most noble of you in Allah's sight is the most pious.' Imam Qurtubi explains that the 'peoples' (shu'ub) are those with unknown genealogies, unlike 'tribes' (qaba'il). Hence all human collectivities, of whatever race, are included in the verse, which moreover states that ethnic identity is a natural and legitimate thing, insofar as it does not obstruct religious solidarity.

There are many hadiths which indicate the prohibition of anti-African attitudes. In one, the pagan al-Harith ibn Hisham is shamed for expressing amazement that the honour of calling the adhan should have been conferred upon Bilal, an Abyssinian. In another hadith, we read: 'A red-faced (i.e. white) man is not superior to a black one; superiority is only in piety. You are all from Adam, and Adam is from dust.' (Bukhari and Muslim)

There is also the famous incident narrated by Ibn al-Mubarak in his Kitab al-Birr wa'l-Sila, in which Abu Dharr (God be pleased with him) asks Bilal (God be pleased with him) to put his foot on Abu Dharr's head, because he fears that he has committed the sin of racism against his Abyssinian brother.

Finally, we note that in all four schools of fiqh, racial affiliation is of no significance in legal entitlements and duties.

The hadith you have cited (and which are only imperfectly translated) therefore refer to the Qur'anic use of the metaphor of darkness and light. Light is one of Allah's names, and darkness refers to ignorance of His presence and acts.

THE PRESERVATION OF ISLAMIC SCRIPTURE

The preservation of Islamic scripture has no precedence in any other culture, civilisation or religion.

It stands as unique and although the details can be complex this complexity actually proves how Muslims were meticulous over their preservation.

They went to the nth degree debating critiquing and developing a systematic methodology in order to ensure Islam was preserved.

I want to give some brief examples just to emphasise this point

1. The Prophet (God's peace and Mercy be upon him) would have designated scribes who were tasked in recording the revelations. We know their names, their lineage and their biographies. We also know the Prophet (saw) would check the memorisation and the recitation of the revelation, both the Quran and his sunnah.
2. The sahaba would ensure that if anybody departed from what they knew of the revelation they'd check with the prophet (saw) as we saw in numerous ahadith in which sahaba who recited the Quran in the different readings would return back to the prophet (saw) to check whether such recitations were correct.
3. After the prophet (saw) we saw the sahaba undertake a great effort to ensure the written verses of the Quran were brought together into one mushhaf (book). They would ensure that those who wrote down the Quran would bring two witnesses before Zaid ibn Thabit (a scribe of the prophet and Hafiz of Quran) that testified that this written parchment was written in front of the prophet (saw) AND that this written form was in accordance to the collective recitation of the generation of the sahaba. This took place within a year after the prophet (saw).
4. Within 25 years after Hijra, Uthman recommissioned Zaid ibn Thabit to reproduce the mushhaf of the Quran to be sent to the different regions of the khilafah. Not just one mushhaf with one reading but multiple copies that encompassed all the readings of the Quran. Uthman sent not only these canonised mushhaf but also a hafiz and qari to recite from this mushhaf to ensure that the different regions had the correct recitation and the divinely revealed scripture before them.
5. In the sunnah the sahaba would cross reference a hadith narrated by a companion with other companions eg when Umar asked Abu Musa al Ansari to bring a witness that the prophet said to knock three times and if no answer then to leave. And he brought Muhammad bin Maslama to testify that he also heard this.
6. The early generation of the Muslims from the time of the sahaba began developing the script of the Arabic language to make it easy for non-native Arabs to recite the Quran and thus prevent any distortion in its reading. From the diacritical marks above the consonance to help with the vowelisation to the development of the script (orthography) and even the ordering of the alphabet. Again all done to preserve the Quran and sunnah and its meanings.
6. The early Muslims (again began in the time of the sahaba) began collecting the vocabulary of the Arabic language developing dictionary of terms.
7. Within the first century the codification began of the Arabic grammar and morphology to ensure that the Arabic language doesn't evolve beyond the rules and grammar of the Arabic spoken at the time of the prophet (saw).
8. The Muslims developed and codified the science of rhetoric (Ilmul Balaaghah) which meant in part the collection of pre Islamic poetry and the manner of language spoken by the Bedouin Arabs who had little interaction with other non-Arab civilisations and cultures. Preserving the rhetoric of the language and its idioms again fixed the language and thus fixed the meaning found within the Quran and sunnah.
9. The Muslims developed the isnad system and the science of Hadith and narrations. Thus they subdivided reports into different categories from ghareeb, aziz, mashhur and mutawattir. They classified these reports through analysis of the type of chains, the narrators in these chains and the reports mentioned by these narrators into four general classes. This became known as uloomul Hadith
10. They laid down criteria to distinguish between irregular readings of the Quran to the standard ones. Thus they said that a standard reading is one which has a chain going back to the prophet (saw), that conformed to the rules of the Arabic language, that was in conformity to the uthmanic mushhaf and that the particular reading was mutawattir. Hence they were able to lay down the seven different categories of divinely revealed variant readings.

So for example they were able to distinguish between Malik and maalik as standard readings from malaka as shadh (irregular) reading in surah Fatiha.

This is just some of what they did to preserve the scripture and meanings found in the Quran and sunnah. And we haven't mentioned the many thousands of huffaz there were in both the Quran and also ahadith.

Now compare this to any other civilisation or religion. Was there anything that approached this level of meticulousness? Were there schools developed just on grammar? Or a detailed isnad system? Or the canonisation of the readings of the Quran?

And just for comparison, we have the New Testament in which we have little to no knowledge of who the gospel writers are. And a gap of decades between the life of Jesus (as) to the first authored gospel

where we do not know who these gospel writers took their information nor whether any methodology was used to distinguish between weak and strong reports.

So what we have is more authentic than Shakespeare's plays, or the text of the magna carta or the Iliad or the British national anthem.

It's really something to contemplate upon and what level Islam was preserved and all of this effort was done because the early Muslims sincerely believed in the revelation and to ensure absolutely no distortion or human element crept into the divinely revealed scriptures of the Quran and the sunnah.

In this there's evidence for Islam's divine origin for if Islam was a human invention why would they have gone into such immense and detailed effort to ensure it remains preserved and free of human distortion?

And even after all of this we have the divine protection from Allah swt.

"Indeed, We have revealed the Dhikr and We will surely be its guardian." [Qur'an 15: 9]

DID PROPHET MUHAMMAD COPY AND PLAGIARIZE BIBLE?? DID PROPHET MUHAMMAD AUTHOR QUR'AN FOR WORLDLY GAINS?? – A REPLY TO ANTI-ISLAM LIARS

Could Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Glory of God be on him) Have Read Bible And Copied??

Qur'an and the Hadith state that Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Glory of God be on him) was Ummi. Qur'an 7:158 states:

[007:158] Say (O Muhammad): O mankind! Lo! I am the messenger of Allah to you all – (the messenger of) Him unto Whom belongeth the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. There is no God save Him. He quickeneth and He giveth death. So believe in Allah and His messenger, the Prophet who can neither read nor write, who believeth in Allah and in His Words, and follow him that happily ye may be led aright. (Pickthall Translation, Quran 7:158)

Pickthall translated the word Ummi as "who can neither read nor write".

According to Ectaco English-Arabic Online Dictionary (<http://www-old.ectaco.com>), arabic word Ummi (أمی) means:
"ILLITERATE, UNLETTERED"

And according to Ectaco English-Arabic Online Dictionary (<http://www-old.ectaco.com>), arabic words for illiterate are:

أمي. يقرأ و يكتب، جاهل،

Source: http://www-old.ectaco.com/online/diction.php3?lang=3&q=2&refid=316r_id=1&rqt_id=19731153&pagelang=23&word=ILLITERATE&direction=1

Qur'an also states that Prophet Muhammed (Peace and Glory of God be on him) was illiterate. Qur'an 29:048 says:

[029:048] And thou wast not (able) to recite a Book before this (Book came), nor art thou (able) to transcribe it with thy right hand: In that case, indeed, would the talkers of vanities have doubted. (Yusuf Ali Translation, Qur'an 29:48)

So until that point we can be sure that Prophet Muhammed (Peace and Glory of God be on him) could not read nor write. Naturally, if prophet could read or write then Non-Muslims would have claimed prophet Muhammed as a liar. They would have seen Prophet Muhammed (Peace and Glory of God be on him) writing or reading and used that as an evidence that he lied in Qur'an 29:48. Their reaction and refusal to use 29:48 as a proof to demonstrate that prophet Muhammed was a liar is a solid proof that Prophet Muhammed (sallallaahu alayho wasallam) could really not read nor write and nor could he consequently have read Bible personally.

Allegation that Waraqa Ibn Nawfal taught Prophet Muhammed

Waraqa was a cousin of Khatija (radhiyallahu anha), first wife of Prophet Muhammed (Peace and Glory of God be on him). He was a learned man and was well versed in New Testament. Some morons assert that Waraqa could have been teaching prophet Muhammed (Peace and Glory of God be on him). There are several historical and logical flaws in that assertion.

Sahih bukhari Volume 1, Book 1, Number 3 states:

"...Waraqa replied in the affirmative and said, "Anyone (man) who came with something similar to what you have brought was treated with hostility; and if I should remain alive till the day when you will be turned out then I would support you strongly." But after a few days Waraqa died..." (Sahih Bukhari Volume 1, Book 1, Number 3)

Firstly, Waraqa died few days later after Prophet Muhammed (Peace and Glory of God be on him) received the first revelation of the Qur'an. Since Waraqa died after few days later then he cannot have been the source of Qur'an, since the Qur'an continued to be revealed continuously upto 23 years after his death. Naturally, since he was dead he could not have been teaching Prophet Muhammed (Peace and Glory of God be on him) or been the source of Qur'an!

Secondly, Waraqa was a pious and a wise man, who dedicated much of his life in the search of God. However, he stated in Sahih Bukhari Volume 4, Book 55, Number 605:

"Narrated 'Aisha(radhiyallahu anha):

The Prophet returned to Khadija (Peace and Glory of God be on him) while his heart was beating rapidly. She took him to Waraqa bin Naufal who was a Christian convert and used to read the Gospels in Arabic Waraqa asked (the Prophet), "What do you see?" When he told him, Waraqa said, "That is the same angel whom Allah sent to the Prophet) Moses. Should I live till you receive the Divine Message, I will support you strongly." (Sahih Bukhari Volume 4, Book 55, Number 605)

Thus he was intending to support Prophet Muhammed (Peace and Glory of God be on him) and accepted his prophethood. If he (Waraqa) had been the source of Qur'an then he would have exposed prophet Muhammed and refused to follow him! It must be remembered that Waraqa was a god-fearing and a noble person.

When was Bible translated into Arabic according to historian?

According to all scholarly sources Bible was not translated into Arabic during Prophet's time. The Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics admits this:

there is no evidence of any parts of the Bible having been translated into arabic before Islam. (Hastings, James. The Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics. Vol. X, p. 540)

Hastings Dictionary of the Bible attributes the first arabic translation of the Bible to the tenth century (Source: Hastings, James. Dictionary of the Bible. p. 105). However, Encyclopedia Judaica attributes the first arabic translation of the Old Testament either to Hunayn Ibn Ishaq (800-873CE) or to Saadiah bin Joseph Gaon (882-942CE) (Source: Encyclopedia Judaica, vol. 4, p. 863)

Paul Wegner explains that the Christian and Jewish traditions that were circulating in Arabia were oral traditions. But the Christian and Jewish groups in Arabia were not orthodox at all, and there were numerous heretical groups:

The Scriptures do not seem to have been extant in an Arabic version before the time of Muhammad (570-632), who knew the Gospel story only in oral form, and mainly from Syriac sources. These Syriac sources were marked by Docetism (believed that Jesus had only a divine nature and only appeared to be incarnate – they thought the material world and thus one's body was inherently evil)... (Wegner, Paul D. The Journey from Texts to Translations. 1999. Grand Rapids: Baker Books. p. 250)

According to New Catholic Encyclopedia:

Neither Arabian Jews nor Arabian Christians, unfortunately, were to be classed among the better representatives of their faiths at the time. The former had lived in comparative isolation possibly since the middle of the 1st millennium B.C., although they had been mildly successful in proselytism and the latter were mainly heretical Monophysites, remote in every sense from the centers of Christian learning. (New Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol 9, p.1001)

There are hadiths stating Waraqah Ibn Nawful translated and read New Testament in Arabic. Sahih Bukhari Volume 6, Book 60, Number 478 states:

"...Waraqa had been converted to Christianity in the Pre-Islamic Period and used to write Arabic and write of the Gospel in Arabic as much as Allah wished him to write. He was an old man and had lost his eyesight. ..." (Sahih Bukhari Volume 6, Book 60, Number 478)

There is no hadith stating that Waraqah Ibn Nawfal translated the whole bible into Arabic, including Old Testament and New Testament, which was official and available to public. As the hadith states Waraqah translated the Gospel as much as Allah willed him to write. He also became blind, which naturally would have prevented him from translating further. Furthermore, history dictates that his translation was for personal usage and not an official translation of the Bible accessible to the Public, therefore Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Glory of God be on him) getting a copy of his translation and reading it is very unlikely. He only translated fragments of the Bible, which was for his personal study. Therefore, the hadiths and history do not contradict on this issue.

Allegation that Qur'an was taught to Prophet Muhammad by a Roman Blacksmith

Some pagans accused Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Glory of God be on him) of learning the Qur'an from the Roman blacksmith, who lived in the outskirts of Makkah and was a Christian. Prophet used to go and watch him do his work often. However, Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala Himself refuted this claim by the use of logic:

[016:103] We know indeed that they say, "It is a man that teaches him." The tongue of him they wickedly point to is notably foreign, while this is Arabic, pure and clear. (Yusuf Ali Translation, Qur'an 16:103)

That would be like stating that a Chinese immigrant, who didn't know English well, authored Shakespeare's work; which is obviously illogical. In a same manner how could a blacksmith who didn't know arabic well have authored

Qur'an, linguistics of which exceed excellence?? Indeed, he would not have managed to even convey and explain his basic beliefs to the Prophet!

Accusation that 'Hanif' taught Prophet Muhammad the Qur'an

Hanif were the group of people at Makkah who tried to follow religion of Abraham (Qur'anic Ibraheem alayhissalaam), and therefore believed in monotheism. Before the revelation of the Qur'an, Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Glory of God be on him) himself was a Hanif.

However, the Hanifs were not learned about Christianity and Judaism. Indeed as it is demonstrated from Sahih Hadith Volume 5, Book 58, Number 169, many of the Hanif knew no background knowledge of Judaism and Christianity, and their religion seems contradicting to Hanifs beliefs. Therefore, even the Hanifs were not aware of Judeo-Christian beliefs, so there is no possibility or proof of them teaching Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Glory of God be on him) about Judeo-Christian beliefs.

Allegation that Priest and Rabbi taught Prophet Muhammad the Qur'an

The discussions between priest and Rabbi and Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Glory of God be on him) took place in Madinah, however much of the Qur'an, especially the stories of Prophets Such as Jesus (Surah Maryam), Joseph (Surah 12) and others were revealed in Makkah. That theory would only be worth considering if the stories of Prophet and other bible-related stories were ONLY revealed in Madinah. But the bible-related stories were revealed in Makkah, where Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Glory of God be on him) did not participate in debates with priests and rabbi.

Were the occasional trips to Syria source of Prophet's knowledge?

There are 2 recorded travel of Prophet Muhammad (sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) to Syria. One when he was 12 years old and second when he was around the age of 25.

On his journey to Syria when he was 12, he met a monk by the name of Bahira. An immediate question arises, how can a child of 12 learn the theology of different religions in such detail at a brief visit, whilst constantly accompanied by his Uncle and other traders and yet manages to remember all this information until the age of 40?? This is a logical fallacy! Naturally a child at such an age cannot have enough intelligence to comprehend complex theology (in detail), and yet remember for more than 28 years.

Furthermore, Seerah (Biography of Prophet Muhammad) tells us that Prophet Muhammad was accompanied by his Uncle and many other traders, naturally they would not forsake a child in a totally different country; they would accompany him to every possible corner! This would minimize the time he has for learning complex theology.

Bahira himself believed in prophethood of Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Glory of God be on him). Indeed, the invitation to entertainment itself was in honour of Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Glory of God be on him). His belief in prophethood of Muhammad (Peace and Glory of God be on him) is described in many seerah texts, this visit is recorded as follows:

Bahira said that he had seen the stones and the trees prostrating to Muhammad as Muhammad had been walking by. They only do this for a prophet of Allah. He looked at the Muhammad's back and noticed the seal of the prophet, which was an oval shape protruding just below Muhammad's shoulder blades. He said that this was one of the signs of a great prophet to come that was taught to them in their books.

Second journey was for trade, the story is narrated here:

Khadija soon sent word to Muhammad asking him if he would take a trade caravan to Syria. She would pay him a high fee, which was double that of which she had paid any other person. She also gave Muhammad the services of a young lad by the name of Maysarah who would look after him on the journey. When Muhammad reached Basra,

he was shading under a tree when a Monk saw him by the name of Nestor. Nestor asked Maysarah about the person sitting under the tree; Maysarah replied that it was Muhammad. Nestor said, that person is no other than a messenger of Allah. Maysarah soon realised that he was in the company of a very special person. He said that he noticed that the heat was extreme when he saw a clear vision of two angels shading Muhammad from the heat of the day.

Main point to notice is that Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Glory of God be on him) was again followed closely by Maysarah, therefore he would have realised if Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Glory of God be on him) had been learning about Bible. And once again the monk Nestor believed in the prophethood of Prophet Muhammed (Peace and Glory of God be on him). Muhammad Mohar Ali writes in his book on this topic:

Had Muhammad contacted during his trade journeys to Syria any Christian monk or layman for obtaining information or even for casual discussion, the Quraysh opponents, many of whom had accompanied him to Syria, would not have failed to make the most of it in their attack against him. That no such allegation was made by them is a decisive proof that he had not sought information about Christianity or Judaism from anyone in the course of his journey to Syria. (Sirat Al-Nabi And the Orientalists Vol. I A by Muhammed Mohar Ali, Page 266)

Did Prophet Muhammad heard Quss preach Christianity at the Ukaz fair??

In his book Sirat Al-Nabi And the Orientalists Vol. I A, Muhammad Mohar Ali writes regarding this:

It is stated that the Prophet heard Quss preach at the Ukaz fair. This tradition is unanimously classified as spurious and is rejected as such. Specially, one of its narrators, Muhammed ibn al-hallaj al-Lakhmi, is condemned as a confirmed liar (kadhdhab). And even according to this spurious report, the Prophet was only one of the audience and did not make any enquiries as such with the speaker. The orientalists's use of this report without any indication of its weakness and untrustworthiness is indicative of how such materials are uncritically accepted and cited to support a particular assumption. (Sirat Al-Nabi And the Orientalists Vol. I A by Muhammed Mohar Ali, page 266-267)

Did Prophet Muhammad Author Qur'an for Worldly Gains?

It is very evident from Seerah (biography of Prophet's life) that Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Glory of God be on him) could not have authored Qur'an for worldly gains.

After unsuccessful attempts of Quraysh (tribe of Makkah) they could do little to prevent islam from spreading. Therefore they tried to bribe Prophet Muhammad into leaving islam. Utbah Ibn Rabiah was sent for this task. This story is narrated in a Seerah called "Muhammed The Last Prophet", by Sayyed Abdul Hasan 'Ali Nadwi (rahimahullah), page 43:

'Nephew,' he [Utbah] said, 'you know your standing among us, but you have brought a matter of grave concern to your people. You have divided their community, made fun of their customs, criticised their gods and their religion and declared some of their ancestors to be unbelievers. Now, listen to me. I will make some proposals for you to examine and perhaps you will accept some of them.' The Messenger of Allah said, 'Speak, Abul-Walid. I am listening.' 'Nephew,' Utbah continued, 'if you want money by this business, we will collect some of our property and make you the wealthiest among us. If you want honour, we will make you our chief so that every decision is yours. If you want a kingdom, we will make you our king. If you are possessed by a ghost of a jinn that you cannot drive away from yourself, we will find skilful doctors to help you. We will spend our wealth on it till you are cured.' When Utbah had finished, the Messenger of Allah asked, 'Have you finished, Abul-Walid?'

'Yes.'

'Then listen to me.' 'I will,' said Utbah. Then the Messenger of Allah recited some verses from Surah Fussilat. Utbah listened intently, putting his hands behind his back and leaning on them. When the Messenger of Allah reached the

place mentioning prostration, he prostrated and then said, 'You have heard what you have heard, Abul-Walid. It is now up to you.' ("Muhammed The Last Prophet", by Sayyed Abdul Hasan 'Ali Nadwi, page 43)

If Prophet Muhammed had been after money, women, kingdom or any other worldly desire then now would have been a perfect chance! But Prophet Muhammed chose Islam above all.

Furthermore, history dictates that Prophet's financial status worsened after the Prophethood mission. "Muhammed The Last Prophet", by Sayyed Abdul Hasan 'Ali Nadwi, page 185 narrates:

'A'ishah has related, 'When the Messenger of Allah left this world, there was nothing in the house that a creature could eat except a little barley on a shelf. ("Muhammed The Last Prophet", by Sayyed Abdul Hasan 'Ali Nadwi, page 185)

Even a person considered poor by today's standards would have had more luxuries than that. If Prophet's intentions were to gain wealth then surely he would have had large amount of wealth and luxuries by the time of his death.

THE ORIGIN OF THE QUR'AN: DEMONIC OR DIVINE?

A popular attack against the Qur'an is the claim that Prophet Muhammed, peace be upon him, was inspired by occult forces such as the Devil or demons. This claim is typically put forward by Christian apologists and missionaries. Now the obvious response is to point out that such an argument is self-defeating, as Muslims can easily make the same lazy accusation against the Bible. However, with this article I wanted a unique approach to refuting this claim, one that involves comparing the Qur'an to a real work associated with the occult. This is a practical approach that will highlight just how wrong such a claim really is.

ANALYSIS OF "THE BOOK OF THE LAW"

Aleister Crowley was an English ceremonial magician and poet. By the time of his death in 1947, he was the world's leading occultist. A prolific writer, he published numerous works on the theory and practice of magic over the course of his life. He is most famous for the text known as The Book of the Law. Although it was Crowley's own hand that penned the work, he never claimed to be its author. Crowley claimed that during his travels to Egypt in 1904, a supernatural entity that called itself Aiwass made contact with him. Aiwass, described by Crowley to be a being of intelligence far beyond that of human beings, proceeded to dictate The Book of the Law directly to him over the course of three days. After this experience, Crowley identified himself as a prophet and claimed that he had been entrusted by the gods to guide humanity into a new spiritual age. He went on to found the religion of Thelema, which he based on the principles of The Book of the Law.

What makes Crowley's book the ideal candidate for comparison against the Qur'an is that Crowley's claims mirror that of Prophet Muhammed, in the sense that he also claimed to be divinely inspired with revelation and appointed as a prophet to enlighten mankind. Before we get into the details of The Book of the Law, it's important to note that in Islam it is strictly prohibited to dabble in magic. The Prophet Muhammed said:

"Avoid the seven deadly sins." People asked, 'What are they?' The Prophet replied, "Polytheism, magic, unlawful killing of a person, living on money from interest, usurping an orphan's wealth, retreating at the time of battle and accusing an innocent married woman of fornication." [1]

Be reassured that The Book of the Law is not a book of magic, but rather a book on philosophy and morality for Crowley's religion of Thelema. Now what follows is an analysis of some verses of The Book of the Law. This will not only give us an insight into the teachings of a real occult work, but will also make us appreciate just how radically different its philosophy and morality is compared to the Qur'an:

Had! The manifestation of Nuit. [Chapter I, verse 1]

The Book of the Law begins in the name of two ancient pagan Egyptian deities, Had and Nuit. Had, was believed to be the lord of the sky and was depicted in the form of the winged disk of the Sun. Nuit was believed to be a goddess and was depicted as a naked woman covered with stars. The twin pairing of the male and female divine aspects is very common in pagan and occult religions. The praising of pagan deities occurs throughout The Book of the Law, as well as Crowley's own personal writings. Contrast this with the Qur'an, which begins in the name of God Almighty:

In the name of Allah, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful [Qur'an 1:1]

The Qur'an teaches that Allah (the Arabic name for God Almighty) is the only true God, the creator of the heavens and the earth, the One who inspired prophets such as Abraham, Moses and Jesus. The Qur'an expressly forbids for worship to be directed to anything other than Him and renounces idolatry, the worship of false gods, in all its forms. Pagan and occult religions tend to deify nature, a practice that the Qur'an rejects in the following verse:

And of His signs are the night and day and the sun and moon. Do not prostrate to the sun or to the moon, but prostrate to Allah, who created them, if it should be Him that you worship. [Qur'an 41:37]

We can see that from the very first verse, both books could not be more different when it comes to worship and the concept of God.

Every man and every woman is a star. [Chapter I, verse 3]

This is a typical example of how The Book of the Law engages with its reader. It commonly appeals to the arrogance and pride of people – in fact it encourages such traits. This is typical of occult religions, with their extravagant costumes, lavish ceremonies and elaborate rituals.

Contrast this with the Qur'an, which reprimands those who have such characteristics:

Allah loves not the arrogant, the vainglorious. [Qur'an 4:36]

Arrogance and pride are considered to be negative traits in Islam, in fact major sins. The Qur'an provides the perfect antidote for those inflicted with this disease – it humbles us by reminding us of our lowly origins:

Does man not consider that We created him from a [mere] sperm-drop – then at once he is a clear adversary? [Qur'an 36:77]

The Bible also shares a similar outlook to the Qur'an in this regard:

Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall. [Proverbs 16:18]

The Qur'an highlights the danger of such traits when it relates the story of the downfall of Satan, whose arrogance and pride prevented him from obeying Allah's command to prostrate to the first human being, Adam:

[Allah] said, "What prevented you from prostrating when I commanded you?" [Satan] said, "I am better than him. You created me from fire and created him from clay." [Qur'an 7:12]

Christian readers should note that the Bible also highlights arrogance and pride as Satanic traits:

How you have fallen from heaven,

morning star, son of the dawn!

You have been cast down to the earth,

you who once laid low the nations!

You said in your heart,
“I will ascend to the heavens;
I will raise my throne
above the stars of God;
I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly,
on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon.

I will ascend above the tops of the clouds;
I will make myself like the Most High.” [Isaiah 14:12-14]

From the perspective of both the Qur'an and the Bible, The Book of the Law is diabolical in its methodology when it appeals to and encourages such traits, which as we can see are Satanic in essence.

Every number is infinite; there is no difference. [Chapter I, verse 4]

The Book of the Law is filled with such seemingly nonsensical statements. Here are some more examples:

The Perfect and the Perfect are one Perfect and not two; nay, are none! [Chapter I, verse 45]

In the sphere I am everywhere the centre, as she, the circumference, is nowhere found. [Chapter II, verse 3]

Let's analyse Crowley's commentary on verse I.4:

It must be understood from the beginning that this book contains the keys of all the knowledge necessary for the operation of the Magical Formulae of the world during the Aeon which it initiates. In this very early verse is already given a Master Key to mathematics and metaphysics. On applying this to current problems of thought, it will be discovered that the long-fast doors fly open at a touch. [2]

As Crowley states, this apparently nonsensical statement is one of the keys of knowledge in his religion. Now, even if one tries to make sense of it by taking some metaphysical interpretation, there is a wider problem at hand. His new religion is supposed to enlighten mankind, but very few can grasp such concepts. Contrast this with the Qur'an, which also claims to be a guide for mankind, but whose message can be understood by everyone. It uses simple speech rather than metaphysical, and employs analogies which are universal in application in order to help us to understand its arguments.

Let my servants be few & secret: they shall rule the many & the known. [Chapter I, verse 10]

Secrecy is another hallmark of the occult, which operates in the shadows. Very little of what goes on behind closed doors is known to the public. Outsiders are offered glimpses in order to lure them in, but it's only when one is initiated into the occult and rises through its ranks that one gains access to all its teachings. Elsewhere The Book of the Law states:

But she said: the ordeals I write not: the rituals shall be half known and half concealed: the Law is for all. [Chapter I, verse 34]

By contrast, the Qur'an encourages Muslims to make themselves known:

And who is better in speech than one who invites to Allah and does righteousness and says, “Indeed, I am of the Muslims.” [Qur'an 41:33]

In Islam there is no such thing as hidden knowledge, in fact it condemns those who have knowledge and conceal it from others:

Indeed, those who conceal what We sent down of clear proofs and guidance after We made it clear for the people in the Scripture – those are cursed by Allah. [Qur'an 2:159]

There is no secret knowledge, no requirement to rise through the ranks for access to information. Islam's teachings are freely available to all who wish to acquire it.

Who calls us Thelemites will do no wrong, if he looks but close into the word. For there are therein Three Grades, the Hermit, and the Lover, and the man of Earth. Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. [Chapter I, verse 40]

"Do what you want" is the central tenet of the religion of Crowley's religion. There are no restrictions, no rules, it is the religion of lawlessness. Do you want is the essence of Satanism, and in fact it debases human beings to the lowly position of animals, for what are animals other than creatures of desire, acting on impulse with no regard for what is morally right or wrong. By comparison, the Qur'an is not in line with the whims and desires of human beings. It commands us to do that which is good and beneficial, and forbids that which is evil and harmful. To sacrifice and forego our bestial instincts for the sake of God elevates us to a position that is higher than the angels, for angels lack free will and have no choice but to worship God. The Book of the Law commands the Thelemite to worship the self, the Qur'an commands Muslims to do what is just and right, even if it means going against one's own self-interests:

O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. [Qur'an 4:135]

Even from a societal point of view, there are major problems with the philosophy of The Book of the Law. Doing whatever you want is counterproductive to a healthy and functioning society. If everyone did whatever they want, then it will result in anarchy. We can see that the origin of The Book of the Law, be it demonic, the Devil, or other than that, is only concerned with the here and now; it does not have concern for the long-term flourishing of humanity. Whereas Islam created a society that established justice in all the lands it ruled and the greatest empire the world had ever seen at the time, exactly what we'd expect if its origin is God.

Another problem with "do what you want" is that it is inherently contradictory. What happens when there is a conflict of wills among its followers? Does the will of one trump the other? The Book of the Law states that its followers, here referred to as a Kings, should not infringe upon one another's rights:

Beware lest any force another, King against King! Love one another with burning hearts; on the low men trample in the fierce lust of your pride, in the day of your wrath. [Chapter II, verse 24]

Since compromise is in order, then it means one is prevented from following one's own will. Suppressing one's own will goes against the central tenet of Crowley's religion, "do what you want". We can see that as a philosophy it is not scalable, the more it spreads among people, the greater the chance of a conflict of wills, and thereby a forced compromise on one's own will.

The word of Sin is Restriction. O man! refuse not thy wife, if she will! O lover, if thou wilt, depart! There is no bond that can unite the divided but love: all else is a curse. Accursed! Accursed be it to the aeons! Hell. [Chapter I, verse 41]

Here, The Book of the Law takes the concept of sin as it is defined in Abrahamic religions and inverts it; to restrict oneself is a sin. Crowley makes some interesting comments on this verse in light of sex and violence:

The sexual act is a sacrament of Will. To profane it is the great offence. All true expression of it is lawful; all suppression or distortion is contrary to the Law of Liberty. To use legal or financial constraint to compel either abstention or submission, is entirely horrible, unnatural and absurd. Physical constraint, up to a certain point, is not so seriously wrong; for it has its roots in the original sex-conflict which we see in animals, and has often the effect of exciting Love in his highest and noblest shape. Some of the most passionate and permanent attachments have begun with rape. Rome was actually founded thereon. Similarly, murder of a faithless partner is ethically excusable, in a certain sense; for there may be some stars whose Nature is extreme violence. The collision of galaxies is a magnificent spectacle, after all... [3]

This is the inevitable result of the philosophy of The Book of the Law when taken to its logical conclusion. There will be Thelemites who incline towards extreme acts such as rape and murder, and in his comments, Crowley implies that if this be their will then so be it. Interestingly, in his commentary on later verses, he expressly forbids acts such as rape:

"As ye will." It should be abundantly clear from the foregoing remarks that each individual has an absolute and indefeasible right to use his sexual vehicle in accordance with its own proper character, and that he is responsible only to himself. But he should not injure himself and his right aforesaid; acts invasive of another individual's equal rights are implicitly self-aggressions. A thief can hardly complain on theoretical grounds if he is himself robbed. Such acts as rape, and the assault or seduction of infants, may therefore be justly regarded as offences against the Law of Liberty, and repressed in the interests of that Law. [4]

So here we can see that Crowley forbids acts such as rape on the grounds that it violates the rights of others. Yet in his commentary on the very next verse, he makes rape permissible on the grounds that it can produce positive results:

To bring down this doctrine to a practical rule for every man or woman by which they may enjoy, in perfection, their sexual life and make it what it rightly is, the holiest part of the religious life, I say 'holiest' because it redeems even physical grossness to partake with spiritual saintship, the intention of this Book of the Law is perfectly simple. Whatever your sexual predilections may be, you are free, by the Law of Thelema, to the star you are, to go your own way rejoicing. It is not indicated here in this text, though it is elsewhere implied, that only one symptom warns that you have mistaken your true Will, and this, if you should imagine that in pursuing your way you interfere with that of another star. It may, therefore, be considered improper, as a general rule, for your sexual gratification to destroy, deform, or displease any other star. Mutual consent to the act is the condition thereof. It must, of course, be understood that such consent is not always explicit. There are cases when seduction or rape may be emancipation or initiation to another. Such acts can only be judged by their results.[5]

What should we make of such contradictory reasoning? Crowley's followers today may argue that these are only Crowley's personal ramblings and are therefore not binding. But The Book of the Law itself makes Crowley an authority for its commentary:

My scribe Ankh-af-na-khonsu, the priest of the princes, shall not in one letter change this book; but lest there be folly, he shall comment thereupon by the wisdom of Ra-Hoor-Khuit. [Chapter I, verse 36]

In fact, Crowley forbade Thelemites from even interpreting the book for themselves, all must refer to his own writings. In the closing remarks of The Book of the Law, Crowley wrote:

All questions of the Law are to be decided only by appeal to my writings, each for himself.

When it comes to contradictions, the Qur'an gives us an objective principle by which we can judge the origin of any scripture:

Then do they not reflect upon the Qur'an? If it had been from [any] other than Allah, they would have found within it much contradiction. [Qur'an 4:82]

In other words, if a scripture is from a source other than God – whether it be demon, the Devil or other than that – then it will contain contradictions, because only God Himself is perfect and inspires perfection. This is exactly the problem that we've seen with The Book of the Law and the authoritative commentary of its prophet Crowley, the presence of glaring contradictions. By comparison, the Qur'an is free of such issues, so clearly they do not share the same origin.

One final point worth discussing is Crowley's attitude toward women. From his point of view, the natural sexual state of women is one of absolute depravity. In his commentary on verse I.41 he wrote:

...Blind asses! who pretend that women are naturally chaste! The Eastern know better; all the restrictions of the harem, of public opinion, and so on, are based upon the recognition of the fact that woman is only chaste when there is nobody around. She will snatch the babe from its cradle, or drag the dog from its kennel, to prove the old saying: 'Natura abhorret a vacuo. For she is the Image of the Soul of Nature, the Great Mother, the Great Whore. [6]

While the reader will no doubt recoil with horror at such a view, Christians should reflect on their own doctrine of Original Sin. The New Testament claims that all human beings have inherited the sin of Adam and Eve when they ate from the forbidden fruit in the garden. Christian theologians say that as a consequence of this, mankind is considered to be in a state of "total depravity" or "pervasive depravity", which is the inability to refrain from evil. Crowley may have put it in more vulgar terms, but both are making the same essential point, that depravity is the natural state of women.

It is only the Qur'an that speaks of mankind's natural state in positive terms, it says that our natural disposition, known as the 'Fitrah', is one of Godliness:

So [Prophet] as a man of pure faith, stand firm and true in your devotion to the religion. This is the natural disposition God instilled in mankind... [Qur'an 30:30]

The Fitrah is the pure state that we are born in, and the Prophet Muhammad explained that it is outside influences such as our parents that take us away from this natural state of devotion to God:

Every child is born according to the Fitrah and then his parents make him Jewish, Christian or Magian. [Sahih Muslim]

I am the Magician and the Exorcist. I am the axle of the wheel, and the cube in the circle. "Come unto me" is a foolish word: for it is I that go. [Chapter II, verse 7]

Here The Book of the Law mentions magic in conjunction with exorcism. The common link between the two is demons, for demons are summoned by magical ritual and banished by exorcism. The invocation of demons was a common practice of Crowley and is the mechanism by which magic works. The Qur'an strictly prohibits the practice of magic in all its forms. In fact, it is considered to be a sin that takes one out of the fold of Islam, such is its severity:

And they followed [instead] what the devils had recited during the reign of Solomon. It was not Solomon who disbelieved, but the devils disbelieved, teaching people magic and that which was revealed to the two angels at Babylon, Harut and Marut. But the two angels do not teach anyone unless they say, "We are a trial, so do not disbelieve [by practicing magic]." And [yet] they learn from them that by which they cause separation between a man and his wife. But they do not harm anyone through it except by permission of Allah. And the people learn what harms them and does not benefit them. But the Children of Israel certainly knew that whoever purchased the magic would not have in the Hereafter any share. And wretched is that for which they sold themselves, if they only knew. [Qur'an 2:102]

These are dead, these fellows; they feel not. We are not for the poor and sad: the lords of the earth are our kinsfolk.

Is a God to live in a dog? No! but the highest are of us. They shall rejoice, our chosen: who sorroweth is not of us.

Beauty and strength, leaping laughter and delicious languor, force and fire, are of us.

We have nothing with the outcast and the unfit: let them die in their misery. For they feel not. Compassion is the vice of kings: stamp down the wretched & the weak: this is the law of the strong: this is our law and the joy of the world. Think not, o king, upon that lie: That Thou Must Die: verily thou shalt not die, but live. Now let it be understood: If the body of the King dissolve, he shall remain in pure ecstasy for ever. Nuit! Hadit! Ra-Hoor-Khuit! The Sun, Strength & Sight, Light; these are for the servants of the Star & the Snake. [Chapter II, verses 18-21]

The Book of the Law has a callous attitude toward the vulnerable. Showing compassion to the poor and weak, who are spoken of in dehumanising terms, is said to be a vice. The irony is that later in life, Crowley himself became the very thing that these verses despise. At a young age Crowley inherited a small fortune from his father, but due to his lavish lifestyle he very quickly squandered his wealth. His final years were spent in poor health, drug addicted and penniless. One can't help but wonder if this irony dawned on the prophet while he lay on his deathbed.

The Qur'an takes a very different attitude to the vulnerable. Compassion toward the poor and weak is considered one of the greatest virtues. In fact, every Muslim who has in their possession a certain amount of wealth is required on an annual basis to give away a small portion in charity. One wisdom behind this is that it prevents people from hoarding excess wealth and ensures that it circulates throughout society, reaching those that are in need of it.

I am the Snake that giveth Knowledge & Delight and bright glory, and stir the hearts of men with drunkenness. To worship me take wine and strange drugs whereof I will tell my prophet, & be drunk thereof! They shall not harm ye at all. It is a lie, this folly against self. The exposure of innocence is a lie. Be strong, o man! lust, enjoy all things of sense and rapture: fear not that any God shall deny thee for this. [Chapter II, verse 22]

The Book of the Law promotes vices such as promiscuous sex, alcohol and drugs. Such ethics are exactly what we would expect of an evil source such as demons or the Devil. By comparison the Qur'an warns us against such vices and tells us not to follow in the footsteps of the Devil:

O mankind! Eat of that which is lawful and wholesome in the earth, and follow not the footsteps of the devil. Lo! he is an open enemy for you. [Qur'an 2:168]

The Book of the Law encourages a lifestyle that is harmful not only to the individual but also wider society. Promiscuous sex, alcohol and drugs bring with them a whole host of issues such as disease, unwanted pregnancy, addiction and financial ruin. So the claim that such things are not harmful is absurd. From a psychological perspective, it's interesting that The Book of the Law happens to condone the very vices that Crowley indulged in before he was a prophet. As far back as Adam and Eve, Satan has used temptation as a means to deceive man, so from this perspective The Book of the Law is devilish in its methodology.

By contrast Islam wants believers to be strong in mind, body and spirit. Anything that is harmful to the individual or wider society is prohibited. The Qur'an points out that immorality is the handiwork of Satan himself:

Satan threatens you with poverty and orders you to immorality, while Allah promises you forgiveness from Him and bounty. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing. [Qur'an 2:268]

Unlike The Book of the Law, the Qur'an does not condone the harmful vices that the seventh century pre-Islamic Arabs indulged in; it prohibited them. This shows us that the one behind the Qur'an prioritises the well-being of mankind over our whims and desires.

I am the Master: thou art the Holy Chosen One. [Chapter II, verse 65]

Such grand claims are typical of The Book of the Law, it frequently asserts its authority and Crowley's prophethood without putting forward any kind of evidence or means of verification. We are just expected to blindly accept its credentials. Whereas the Qur'an puts forward objective arguments for its divine origin, for example:

Say, "If mankind and the jinn gathered in order to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like of it, even if they were to each other assistants." [Qur'an 17:88]

Lift up thyself! for there is none like unto thee among men or among Gods! Lift up thyself, o my prophet, thy stature shall surpass the stars. They shall worship thy name, foursquare, mystic, wonderful, the number of the man: and the name of thy house 418. [Chapter II, verse 78]

Notice how this verse glorifies Crowley, virtually deifying him. By contrast the Qur'an emphasises the humanity of Prophet Muhammad:

Muhammad is not but a messenger. [Other] messengers have passed on before him. So if he was to die or be killed, would you turn back on your heels [to disbelief]? And he who turns back on his heels will never harm Allah at all; but Allah will reward the grateful. [Qur'an 3:144]

Prophet Muhammad himself warned Muslims against deifying him:

Do not exaggerate my praises as the Christians have done with the son of Mary. Verily, I am only a servant, so refer to me as the servant of Allah and his messenger.[7]

The Qur'an even corrects Prophet Muhammad in instances where he made mistakes, for example:

The Prophet frowned and turned away. Because there came to him the blind man, [interrupting]. But what would make you perceive, [O Muhammad], that perhaps he might be purified. Or be reminded and the remembrance would benefit him? As for he who thinks himself without need, to him you give attention. And not upon you [is any blame] if he will not be purified. But as for he who came to you striving [for knowledge]. While he fears [Allah], from him you are distracted. [Qur'an 80:1-10]

What should we make of this lofty claim that Crowley's stature "shall surpass the stars"? In light of the historical record thus far, it's debatable as to whether this has been fulfilled. On the one hand, Crowley is revered within the world of the occult and magic. He became a cultural icon in the 1960s, with his libertine attitude to sex and drugs striking a chord with the counter-culture movement. However, on the other hand, it has been over a century since The Book of the Law was first written, and over half a century since Crowley's death, yet his religion is still not mainstream. Now if we interpret the claim that Crowley's stature "shall surpass the stars" in light of the preceding statement of the same verse, that "there is none like unto thee among men or among Gods", then this prophecy is an abject failure. Crowley has always had a tiny following and his impact on the world stage is negligible when compared to other religions and movements that emerged contemporary to him.

This is just one example of a problematic prophecy in The Book of the Law, it is filled with ambiguous and inaccurate predictions. We can conclude that whatever entity inspired this book, be it demons, the Devil or even Crowley's own mind, what we know for certain is that it is not the product of a divine being. This is because divine beings have knowledge and control over the future. By comparison, the Qur'an and teachings of Prophet Muhammad are filled with accurate prophecies about the future.

What this shows is that the one who inspired the Qur'an and Prophet Muhammad has knowledge of the unseen which is a characteristic of God, not His creation such as demons or the Devil. Even according to the Bible, accurate knowledge of the future is a sign that someone has been genuinely inspired by God:

You may say to yourselves, "How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the Lord?" If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the Lord does not take place or come true, that is a message the Lord has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously, so do not be alarmed. [Deuteronomy 18:21-22]

The Book of the Law fails to fulfil this biblical standard, whereas the Qur'an more than satisfies it.

For perfume mix meal & honey & thick leavings of red wine: then oil of Abramelin and olive oil, and afterward soften & smooth down with rich fresh blood.

The best blood is of the moon, monthly; then the fresh blood of a child, or dropping from the host of heaven; then of enemies; then of the priest or of the worshippers; last of some beast, no matter what.

This burn: of this make cakes & eat unto me. This hath also another use; let it be laid before me, and kept thick with perfumes of your orison: it shall become full of beetles as it were and creeping things sacred unto me. [Chapter III, verses 23-25]

This section of The Book of the Law goes into detail about the offerings that should be made by its followers. We can see that the emphasis of the ritual is blood, the verses go into great detail in specifying a hierarchy of blood. By comparison, the Qur'an tells us that when animal offerings are made by Muslims, it's not the blood that matters to Allah, but rather the pious act of obedience in performing the sacrifice:

And the camels and cattle We have appointed for you as among the symbols of Allah; for you therein is good. So mention the name of Allah upon them when lined up [for sacrifice]; and when they are [lifeless] on their sides, then eat from them and feed the needy and the beggar. Thus have We subjected them to you that you may be grateful. Their meat will not reach Allah, nor will their blood, but what reaches Him is piety from you. Thus have We subjected them to you that you may glorify Allah for that [to] which He has guided you; and give good tidings to the doers of good. [Qur'an 22:36-37]

Sacrificing an animal for the sake of Allah is said to be a way of showing gratitude to Him for the numerous blessings He has bestowed upon us, as well as a righteous act in feeding the poor and needy. These are the purposes behind the animal offering, the spilt blood is of no value in and of itself. It's important to note that human sacrifice is prohibited in Islam, only animals can be offered. When it comes to the occult and pagan religions in general, rituals involving human blood have been used throughout history. We've seen that The Book of the Law informs its followers that human blood – be it menstrual, the blood of children, or the blood of one's enemies – is of higher value than animal blood.

I am in a secret fourfold word, the blasphemy against all gods of men.

Curse them! Curse them! Curse them!

With my Hawk's head I peck at the eyes of Jesus as he hangs upon the cross.

I flap my wings in the face of Mohammed & blind him.

With my claws I tear out the flesh of the Indian and the Buddhist, Mongol and Din.

Bahlasti! Ompehda! I spit on your crapulous creeds.

Let Mary inviolate be torn upon wheels: for her sake let all chaste women be utterly despised among you! [Chapter III, verses 49-55]

One of the roles of religious scripture is to highlight the falsehood of beliefs that are contrary to its own teachings. Guidance is not just about stating what is correct, but also about negating that which is incorrect. The Book of the Law does not do this in any meaningful way. These verses mention the likes of Jesus and Muhammad, but instead of intellectually dismantling the teachings of these prophets, it instead insults them in a very petty manner that

comes across as insecure. This is quite unbefitting of religious scripture, and certainly not what one would expect were its author a divine being.

By comparison, the Qur'an respectfully engages with the beliefs of those it deems to be upon falsehood. Muslims are commanded to refrain from insulting the gods of other religions:

And do not insult those they invoke other than Allah, lest they insult Allah in enmity without knowledge. [Qur'an 6:108]

The Qur'an commands believers to engage with non-believers in a respectful and dignified manner:

Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. [Qur'an 16:125]

When it comes to dismantling the theology of false religion, the Qur'an uses intellectual arguments, never petty insults. The prophets of the Jewish and Christian scriptures are acknowledged as genuine prophets, and are even mentioned more times by name in the Qur'an than Muhammad himself. This is an indication that the one who authored the Qur'an and inspired Muhammad is the same entity that inspired the prophets of old like Abraham, Moses and Jesus.

CONCLUSION

To argue that the Qur'an is the product of some unknown force of unknown motives would be tantamount to invoking the existence of any unknown entity to explain anything. From this perspective, the Christian claim that the Qur'an was inspired by occult forces such as the Devil or demons is an intellectual cop-out. Everything can be reduced to absurdity by attributing it to occult forces, so this is also a self-defeating scepticism as it means that nothing can be true.

In this article we have tackled this claim by taking the unique approach of comparing the Qur'an to The Book of the Law, a typical occult work. After doing a detailed comparison we've seen that they share very little in common, which is contrary to the claim that they come from the same source. Not only are they opposites in terms of their theology and morality, but it is only the Qur'an that puts forward objective evidence to support its claims of divine origin. Crowley himself was a master occultist and would have had access to the same dark forces that allegedly inspired Prophet Muhammad. Yet we've seen that The Book of the Law pales in comparison to the phenomenon that is the Qur'an, both in terms of its content and impact on the global stage.

References.

1 – Sahih Bukhari & Sahih Muslim.

2 – Aleister Crowley, *The Law is for All*, see commentary on verse I.4.

3 – Ibid., see commentary on verse I.41.

4 – Ibid., see commentary on verse I.51.

5 – Ibid., see commentary on verse I.52.

6 – Ibid., see commentary on verse I.41.

7 – Sahih Bukhari.

HOW DO WE KNOW THE QUR'AN IS UNCHANGED?

The awakening of Europe from the Dark Ages and the subsequent intellectual enlightenment of the 1600s-1800s was one of the most powerful movements in modern history. It brought to Europe a dedication to empirical science, critical thinking, and intellectual discourse. Much of this was imported from the Muslim world's intellectual history, through Muslim entry points into Europe such as Spain, Sicily, and Southeast Europe.

This rise in intellectual work coincided with a period of European imperialism and colonialism over the Muslim world. European nations such as England, France, and Russia slowly conquered portions of the Muslim world, dividing it among themselves. Thus the intellectual enlightenment, coupled with imperialism over the Muslim world, led to what the Europeans saw as a critical study of Islam, its history, beliefs, and teachings. This movement is known as Orientalism. One of the greatest shortcomings of Orientalism, however, is the analysis of Islamic history on European terms, discarding the centuries of academic work put in by great Muslim minds since the time of the Prophet Muhammad .

One of the most dangerous aspects of Orientalism was the European study of the origins of the Quran. Since it is well accepted in academic circles that both the Torah of the Jews and the New Testament of the Christians have changed over the centuries, European academics erroneously believed the same must be true about the Quran. Their efforts to prove their belief that the Quran has been changed and is not authentic led to studies and works of questionable intention and low scholarly merit. This article will critically analyze the origins of the Quran, its transmission, and its compilation, to understand why Muslims accept the copies of the Quran they have in their homes to be the exact same words that were spoken by Prophet Muhammad in the early 600s AD.

The Promise to Protect

Muslims believe that Allah has already promised to protect the Quran from the change and error that happened to earlier holy texts. Allah states in the Quran in Surat al-Hijr, verse 9:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الْكِتَابَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

“Indeed, it is We who sent down the Quran and indeed, We will be its guardian.”

For Muslims, this verse of promise from Allah is enough to know that He will indeed protect the Quran from any errors and changes over time. For people who do not accept the authenticity of the Quran in the first place, however, clearly this verse cannot serve as proof of its authenticity, since it is in the Quran itself. It is from here that the academic discussion begins.

Narration of the Quran to the Companions

The revelation of the Quran was not an isolated event in time. It was a constant stream of verses descending to Muhammad throughout the 23 years of his prophethood in Makkah and Madinah. The Prophet appointed numerous Companions of his to serve as scribes, writing down the latest verses as soon as they were revealed. Mu'awiya ibn Abu Sufyan and Zaid bin Thabit (God be pleased with him) were among the scribes who had this duty. For the most part, new verses would be written on scraps of bone, hide, or parchment, since paper had not yet been imported from China. It is important to note that Muhammad would have the scribes read back the verses to him after writing them down so he can proofread and make sure there were no errors.

To further ensure that there were no errors, Muhammad ordered that no one records anything else, not even his words, hadith, on the same sheet as Quran. Regarding the sheets that the Quran was being written down on, he stated “and whoever has written anything from me other than the Quran should erase it” . This was done to ensure that no other words were accidentally thought to be part of the text of the Quran.

It is important to understand, however, that physical writing down of the Quran was not the main way that the Quran was recorded. Arabia in the 600s was an oral society. Very few people could read and write, thus huge emphasis was placed on ability to memorize long poems, letters, and other messages. Before Islam, Makkah was a

centre of Arabic poetry. Annual festivals were held every year that brought together the best poets from all over the Arabian Peninsula. Exuberant attendees would memorize the exact words that their favourite poets recited and quote them years and decades later.

Thus, in this type of oral society, the vast majority of the Companions learned and recorded the Quran by memorization. In addition to their natural ability to memorize, the rhythmic nature of the Quran made its memorization much easier.

The Quran was not narrated to just a few select Companions. It was heard and memorized by hundreds and thousands of people, many of them travellers to Madinah. Thus, chapters and verses of the Quran quickly spread during the life of the Prophet to all corners of the Arabian Peninsula. Those who had heard verses from the Prophet would go and spread them to tribes far away, who would also memorize them. In this way, the Quran achieved a literary status known among the Arabs as *mutawatir*. *Mutawatir* means that it was so vastly disseminated to so many different groups of people, who all had the same exact wording, that it is inconceivable that that any one person or group could have falsified it. Some sayings of the Prophet are known to be authentic through it being *mutawatir*, but the entire Quran itself is accepted as being *mutawatir*, because of its wide spread during the life of the Prophet through oral means.

Collection After the Death of the Prophet

We have thus far seen that the way the Quran was taught to the numerous Companions of the Prophet prevented it from being subject to the protection of a few people. As verses became widespread across the Islamic world, it was impossible for those verses to be changed without Muslims in other parts of the world noticing and correcting them. Furthermore, during the life of Prophet Muhammad, the angel Jibreel would recite the entire Quran with him once a year, during Ramadan. When the Quran was finished being revealed near the end of the Prophet's life, he made sure that numerous companions knew the entire Quran by heart.

During the reigns of the first caliphs, however, a need to compile all the verses into a central book arose. Taking preemptive action, the caliphs who ruled the Muslim world after the death of the Prophet feared that if the number of people who had the Quran memorized dipped too low, the community would be in danger of losing the Quran forever. As a result, the first caliph, Abu Bakr (God be pleased with him), who ruled from 632 to 634, ordered a committee be organized, under the leadership of Zaid bin Thabit (God be pleased with him), to collect all the written pieces of Quran that were spread throughout the Muslim community.

The plan was to collect them all into one central book that could be preserved in case the people who had the Quran memorized died out.

Zaid (God be pleased with him) was very meticulous about who he accepted verses from. Because of the enormous responsibility of not accidentally altering the words of the Quran, he only accepted pieces of parchment with Quran on them had to have been written down in the presence of the Prophet and there had to be two witnesses who can attest to that fact. These fragments of Quran that he collected were each compared with the memorized Quran itself, ensuring that there was no discrepancy between the written and oral versions.

When the task was completed, a finalized book of all the verses was compiled and presented to Abu Bakr (God be pleased with him), who secured it in the archives of the young Muslim state in Madinah. It can be assumed with certainty that this copy that Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu anhu) had matched exactly the words that Muhammad had spoken because of the numerous memorizers of Quran present in Madinah, coupled with the disseminated pieces of parchment on which it was recorded. Had there been discrepancies, the people of Madinah would have raised the issue. There is, however, no record of any opposition to Abu Bakr's project or its outcome.

The Mus'haf of Uthman (God be pleased with him)

A copy of Uthman's Mus'haf, kept in Topkapi Palace in Istanbul

During the caliphate of Uthman (God be pleased with him), from 644 to 656, new issue regarding the Quran arose in the Muslim community: pronunciation. During the life of the Prophet, the Quran was revealed in seven different dialects – qira'as. The dialects differed slightly in their pronunciation of certain letters and words, but the overall meaning was unchanged. These seven dialects were not an innovation brought in by corruption of the Quran in later years, as it was mentioned by the Prophet himself, and there are numerous sayings of his describing the authenticity of all seven dialects that are recorded in the hadith compilations of Bukhari and Muslim. The reason for there being different dialects for the Quran was to make it easier for different tribes around the Arabian Peninsula to learn and understand it.

During Uthman's (God be pleased with him) reign, people coming into the Muslim world at its periphery, in places like Persia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and North Africa were beginning to learn the Quran. An issue arose for them when it came to pronunciation of words, as they would hear different Arabs pronouncing the same verses differently. Although the different pronunciations were sanctioned by the Prophet and there was no inherent harm in people reciting and teaching them, it led to confusion among new non-Arab Muslims.

Uthman (God be pleased with him) responded by commissioning a group to come together, organize the Quran according to the dialect of the tribe of Quraysh (the Prophet's tribe), and spread the Qurayshi dialect to all parts of the empire. Uthman's (God be pleased with him) team (which again included Zaid bin Thabit) compiled a Quran into one book (known as a mus'haf – from the word for page, sahifa) based on first hand manuscripts along with the memories of the best Quran reciters of Madinah. This mus'haf was then compared with the copy that Abu Bakr (God be pleased with him) commissioned, to make sure there were no discrepancies. Uthman (God be pleased with him) then ordered numerous copies of the mus'haf to be made, which were sent to far off provinces throughout the empire, along with reciters who would teach the masses the Quran.

Because the Quran was now compiled and being produced on a regular basis, there was no need for the numerous fragments of verses that people had in their possession. He thus ordered that those fragments be destroyed so they cannot be used in the future to cause confusion among the masses. Although Orientalists use this incident to try to prove the erroneous claim that there were some discrepancies that Uthman (God be pleased with him) wanted to eliminate, that is a simplistic way of looking at the event. The entire community in Madinah, including numerous eminent Companions such as Ali ibn Abi Talib (God be pleased with him), willingly went along with this plan, and no objections were voiced. Had he been eliminating legitimate differences, the people of Madinah would have surely objected or even revolted against Uthman (God be pleased with him), neither of which happened. Instead, the mus'haf of Uthman (God be pleased with him) was accepted by the entire community as authentic and correct.

The Script of the Quran

Another complaint that Orientalists make deals with the fact that the Mus'haf of Uthman (God be pleased with him) lacked any diacritical marks (dots that differentiated the letters and vowel markings). The letters seen in his mus'haf are thus just the skeletal base of Arabic letters. For example, the word قَالَ (he said), without diacritical marks would look like this: قـالـ. According to the claims of Orientalists, a reader can then read the word as فـيلـ (elephant), قـيلـ (before), or قــيلـ (he kissed). Clearly, reading such different words would have a huge difference in meaning. Orientalists such as the Australian professor of the early 1900s, Arthur Jeffery, claim that Uthman's copy of the Quran, with its lack of diacritical marks made it possible for variant readings, and thus variant meanings to exist, making the Quran today not authentic.

There are numerous flaws in this argument:

First, the fact that Uthman (God be pleased with him) sent reciters with his copies of the mus'haf is of huge importance. We must remember that the main way the Quran was preserved was orally, and the written copies

were only meant to be a supplement to oral recitation. If someone already has a verse memorized, the skeletal letters in a copy of Uthman's (God be pleased with him) mus'haf served only as a visual aid when reciting. To illustrate this example, we can look at the following inscription on the inside of the Dome of the Rock, in Jerusalem. The building was built in the late 600s and features one of the oldest calligraphic inscriptions in Arabic on the inside of the building, written in the same Kufic script as Uthman's (God be pleased with him) mus'haf:

For someone familiar with the Arabic language and some basic common phrases regarding the supremacy of Allah, it is easy to make out what this part of the inscription says:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم لا إله إلا الله وحده لا
شريك له الملك و له الحمد يحيى و يحيى و هو
على كل شيء قدير محمد عبد الله و رسوله

In the name of God, the Merciful the Compassionate.

There is no god but God. He is One. He has no associate.

Unto Him belongeth sovereignty and unto Him belongeth praise.

He quickeneth and He giveth death; and He has Power over all things.

Muhammad is the servant of God and His Messenger.

In the same way as this passage, the mus'haf of Uthman (God be pleased with him) could be easily read by someone who was familiar with the verses and the Arabic script. Thus, the claim that the lack of diacritical marks makes it impossible to know what the original word was is clearly baseless.

A page from the Uthmani Mus'haf showing part of Surat Muhammad. Note the lack of diacritical marks.

The second problem with the claims of Orientalists like Jeffery deals with the idea of reading a word completely wrong based on the lack of diacritical marks. Let us assume for a moment that there are no reciters around to explain how a verse should be read from Uthman's (God be pleased with him) mus'haf and someone comes across the word قبل. As we stated earlier, this can be a number of different words based on where the diacritical marks are. However, from context clues, an educated reader can easily figure out what word it is supposed to be. It is almost impossible for a reader to replace the word "before" with "elephant" and have the sentence still make sense. While in some cases a reader may accidentally replace one word with another that still makes sense, these occasions are rare with the way the Arabic language is set up, and all that is still assuming there are no Quranic reciters around to guide the reader.

Over time, during the 700s and 800s, diacritical marks began being added to the mus'hafs throughout the Muslim world. This was done as the Muslim world shifted from an oral to a written society, to further facilitate reading from a copy of the Quran, and to eliminate errors by people who did not already know the verses they were reading. Today, almost all modern mus'hafs include diacritical marks on the skeletal letters along with vowel markings to make reading easier.

The Isnad System

One of the most pressing issues in the eyes of the early Muslims was the protection of the sanctity of the Quran. Numerous times throughout the Quran and sayings of the Prophet , the Muslims are reminded that the Jews and Christians corrupted their texts over time, which now cannot be taken as authentic. As a result, early Muslims

developed a system for ensuring that the Quran and hadith would not be subject to change by human error, either intentional or unintentional.

The system that developed is known as the isnad system. The isnad system emphasized the sanad, of a particular saying. For example, in the hadith compilation of Bukhari, each hadith is preceded by a chain of narrators that goes from Bukhari back to the Prophet Muhammad. This chain is known as a sanad. To ensure that the hadith is authentic, each narrator in the chain must be known to be reliable, have a good memory, be trustworthy, and have other righteous qualities.

Part of the Arabic inscription in the Kufic script inside the Dome of the Rock, built in 691.

The early Islamic community placed huge emphasis on this system for determining the authenticity of hadith as well as verses from the Quran. If someone were to claim to have had a verse that was not in the canonical text of Uthman's (God be pleased with him) mus' haf, scholars would look at the chain that person claimed went back to the Prophet and determined from it if there was a chance that it was authentic. Clearly, anyone forging verses of the Quran would not be able to connect it to the Prophet , and his/her claim would be discounted according to the isnad system.

The isnad system thus worked to preserve the sanctity of the Quran as well as the hadith, as it prevented people from making erroneous claims that could then be accepted as fact. Through the focus on the reliability of the sanad, the reliability of the verses or hadith themselves could be ascertained. Zaid bin Thabit (God be pleased with him) used a proto-isnad system in his work compiling the Quran during the caliphate of Abu Bakr (God be pleased with him), and the growth of the isnad system in subsequent decades helped protect the text from being altered in any way.

Conclusions

This article is not meant to be a fully exhaustive study of the history of the Quran. The scholarship of hundreds of people throughout Islamic history to ensure the sanctity of the Quran cannot be boiled down to a few thousand words. However, it is clear through the introductory issues mentioned here that the text of the Quran clearly was not altered from the time of Muhammad to the present day. The fact that it was so widespread during his life helped ensure that any malicious attempts to change the words of the holy book would be futile. The meticulous compilation of the text by Abu Bakr and Uthman (God be pleased with him) served as a backup system in case the oral preservation of the Quran was lost. Finally, the isnad system helped ensure any claims to add to or remove from the Quran could not pass by a scholarly process that was central to the preservation of Islam itself.

In conclusion, the claims of Orientalists that the Quran has been changed overtime as the Bible and Torah have are clearly misleading. There is no evidence backing up the idea that the Quran has changed, and attempts to prove that it has are based on rudimentary and uneducated understandings of the history of the Quranic text.

REFUTING THE CHRISTIAN LIE THAT QUR'AN 16:106 & 40:28 ENCOURAGES "LYING TO STRENGTHEN ISLAM"

In the above snap, a Christian Islamophobe misrepresents the concerned verses in this topic without any proof to spread lies about Islam, we will thoroughly expose his deceit here.

What is Taqiyyah??

The Anti-Muslim demagogues love to talk about this weird, so called, rule that permits Muslims to lie to spread Islam. I had never even heard of it until I was accused of it by someone in a discussion once. The basic idea, according to them, is that if any Muslim ever denies being a blood thirsty lunatic engaged in perpetual war against the West, they must be lying. Muslims are simply presumed guilty, and if we profess innocence that is only further evidence of our guilt.

It should be fairly clear to any rational being that lying to spread a religion is nonsensical. If I lie to you about what Islam is and you convert, I haven't spread Islam because what you have accepted was a lie.

These constant stream of Islamophobes carping on about how Muslims are allowed to lie to non-Muslims whilst appealing to something called "taqiyyah" (also spelled, "takiya" and "taqiyya") also end up convincing the average joe non-muslim about this myth

Rather than relying on shoddy hate sites/Christian missionaries to educate us about taqiyyah we shall rely on SCHOLARLY authority – largely in the form of R. Strothmann's relevant section in "Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam" (by H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers) and Cyril Glasse's Concise Encyclopedia of Islam

What is "Taqiyyah", "Takiya", "Taqiyya"?

This term is spelt variously; "taqiyyah", "takiya" or "taqiyya".

"Takiya (A.), caution, fear (see glossarium to Tabari S.V. T-K-A) pr kitman, "disguise" is the technical term for dispensation from the requirements of religion under compulsion or threat of injury."

"Taqiyyah (From the root word waqa "to safeguard"; "self-protection" and hence "dissimulation [in order to protect oneself]")."

So, taqiyyah (takiya, taqiyya) is concerning dissimulation due to force – i.e. when an individual is forced to conceal.

Sadly, Islamophobes – in order to obtain an unchecked platform and/or demonise Muslims – have misapplied this term in their exaggerated claims of "Muslims are allowed to lie to the unbelievers".

At what level of force is Takiya (Taqiyyah, Taqiya) justified?

"But an individual is not justified in takiya nor bound to hijra [emigration] if the compulsion remains within the endurable limits, as in the case of temporary imprisonment or flogging which does not result in death"

So, this make a mockery of the Islamophobes' general suggestions of "Muslims are allowed to lie to the unbelievers" as even under threat of imprisonment and flogging Muslims are not justified in takiya. The level of force which justifies oneself in takiya is that of an unbearable level.

Takiya (taqiyya, taqiyyah) and the type of lies...

One may ask, what type of "disguise" is allowed under takiya (taqiyyah, taqiyya)?

Let's be clear about takiya (taqiyyah, taqiyya); "The principle of dissimulation of one's religious beliefs in order to avoid persecution or imminent harm, where no useful purpose would be served by publicly affirming them."

So takiya (taqiyyah, taqiyya) is not used to convert folk to Islam nor is it used in Islamic text books or anything of such a nature. It is simply a form of concealment used to avoid persecution!

For further clarity, we are not talking about general, everyday fibs here, thus the ethical question of dishonesty is bypassed:

“The ethical question whether such forced lies are nevertheless lies, such a forced denial of the faith nevertheless a denial, is not put at all by one “who conceal himself” as he is not in a state of confidence which would be broken by lies or denial.”

Sadly, our Islamophobic counterparts attempt to convince the gullible that takiya (taqiyyah, taqiyya) allows Muslims to lie (or conceal) about aspects of their faith (Islam) as well as lie in general.

Famous case of Taqiyyah (Taqiyya, Takiya)

A common example of takiya (taqiyyah, taqiya) involves a Muslim (Ammar Bin Yasir, a companion of the Prophet Muhammad, Peace and Glory of God be on him) being forced to worship idols and insult the Prophet of Islam.

The level of force the polytheists applied on Ammar bin Yasir can be imagined by Amr bin Maymoon’s statement, “The polytheists tortured Ammar with fire”.

“Abu Ubaydah bin Muhammad bin Ammar bin Yasir said: The polytheists seized Ammar and they did not let him off until he was forced to insult the Messenger of Allah and say good things about their deities”

Ammar bin Yasir (God be pleased with him) told Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Glory of God be on him) of what he was forced to say.

“The Prophet (Peace and Glory of God be on him) said: “Say it again if they ask (i.e. force) you to do so”.”

So, in order to avoid such torture the Prophet allowed Ammar bin Yasir to use “taqiyya”

If Jesus (pbuh) had done the same, our Christian friends would have lauded it as an act of piety and mercy. Instead we see Islamophobes exaggerating this form of concealment in order to demonise Muslims. It’s a crazy old world!

Taqiyyah and the Shi’ites (Shia)

“It is, however, associated most closely with the Shi’ites who practiced taqiyyah systematically and widely during periods of Sunni domination to hide their beliefs from Sunni Muslims.”

Obviously, if these Shi’ites felt they would have been persecuted for publicly announcing their shia beliefs, one can understand why they concealed (used taqiyya) their beliefs.

Is Taqiyyah allowed in the Qur'an?

Our Islamophobic friends jump up and down in joy whilst proclaiming taqiyyah (taqiyya, takiya) is allowed in the Quran. Let’s analyse (via scholarship) the three Verses they cite.

Quran 16:106 and taqiyyah (taqiyya, takiya)?

Whoso disbelieveth in Allah after his belief – save him who is forced thereto and whose heart is still content with the Faith – but whoso findeth ease in disbelief: On them is wrath from Allah. Theirs will be an awful doom. [Pikthal translation of the Quran 16:106]

The reason for this verse is unanimously said to have been the case of Ammar bin Yasir (God be pleased with him), whose conscience was set at rest by this revelation when he was worried about his forced worshipping of idols and objurgation of the Prophet.

The story of Ammar bin Yasir (God be pleased with him) is relayed earlier (see above).

Tabari says on Surah 16:106 (Tafsir, Bulak 1323 sqq. 24.122): If any one is compelled and professes unbelief with his tongue, while his heart contradicts him, to escape his enemies, no blame falls him on him, because God takes his servants as their hearts believe”

The Quran's (16:106) allowance of uttering disbelief whilst under extreme force is hardly justification for the outrageous smears the Islamophobes propagate and want the unwary to believe.

Quran 3:28 and taqiyyah (taqiyya, takiya)?

Let not the believers take disbelievers for their guardians in preference to believers. Whoso doeth that hath no connection with Allah unless (it be) that ye but guard yourselves against them, taking (as it were) security. Allah biddeth you beware (only) of Himself. Unto Allah is the journeying. [Pikthal translation of the Quran 3:28]

This Verse instructs Muslims to not take the unbelievers as patrons over the believers but does allow for this in the case of fear. Tuqatan is used here (a verbal noun of taqiyyah). Tafsir Jalalayn explains:

“unless you protect yourselves against them, as a safeguard (tuqātan, ‘as a safeguard’, is the verbal noun from taqiyyatan), that is to say, [unless] you fear something, in which case you may show patronage to them through words, but not in your hearts” [Tafsir Jalalayn – 3:28]

It is hardly something Islamophobes can latch onto as evidence for their demonization of Muslims as this Verse allows concealment (taqiyyah, taqiyya, takiya) in the case of fear (i.e. to avoid persecution). We are essentially back to where we started as initially stated on taqiyyah:

Takiya (A.), caution, fear (see glossarium to Tabari S.V. T-K-A) or kitman, “disguise” is the technical term for dispensation from the requirements of religion under compulsion or threat of injury.

Taqiyyah (From the root word waqa “to safeguard”; “self-protection” and hence “dissimulation [in order to protect oneself]”).

Quran 40:28 and Taqiyyah?

“And a believing man from the family of Pharaoh who concealed his faith said, “Do you kill a man [merely] because he says, ‘My Lord is Allah’ while he has brought you clear proofs from your Lord? And if he should be lying, then upon him is [the consequence of] his lie; but if he should be truthful, there will strike you some of what he promises you. Indeed, Allah does not guide one who is a transgressor and a liar.” – [Qur'an 40:28]

The above verse has been cited by critics that the passage encourages deception. A careful reading of the verse shows that there is nothing in the verse of such encouragement. When we read the verse, it says that there was a family member of Pharaoh who was a believer who concealed his faith. How is that deception? I mean, if the case was that someone asked him what his religion was and he said contrary to what he believed inside his heart, then we can say it is deception. But there is nothing of such. Hence, no deception was used by the believer.

Commentary on Quran 40:28:

Ma'ariful-Qur'an – Maulana Muhammad Shafi

In verse 28, it was said: ... (who had kept his faith secret). This tells us that a person who does not declare his Iman (faith) before people, yet remains staunch in his heart, then this person is a believer. But, it stands proved from clear textual authority (of the Qur'an and Hadith) that, for Iman to be acceptable, the simple certitude of the heart is not enough, instead, it is subject to the condition of verbal confession and declaration. Unless the person concerned declares it verbally, he or she will not be a believer. However, making this verbal declaration before people publicly is not necessary. The only reason why it is needed is that unless people come to know about the person's iman, they would remain unable to interact with him or her in the same way as they do with Muslims. (Qurtubi)

Earlier in the verse, by saying: ... (a believing man from the House of the Pharaoh), it is virtually demonstrated that the believer, in his ensuing dialogue with Pharaoh and his people, invited them toward truth and faith as well as restrained them from killing Sayyidina Musa (Moses). [Ma'ariful-Qur'an volume 7, page 602]

Lying about the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Glory of God be on him)

Islamophobes, in an attempt to obtain an unchecked platform, do suggest Muslims misinform ("use taqiyya") about the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Glory of God be on him). This is an utter absurdity as it is a grave sin for a Muslim to misinform about the Prophet Muhammad as the Prophet stated:

"Whoever lies about me intentionally shall take a place for himself in hell" (al-Adhkar (y102), 510-12)

In fact, presenting misinformation about the Prophet (Peace and Glory of God be on him) was considered an extreme offense amongst early Muslim communities:

Habib ibn ar-Rabi' said that it is disbelief to alter his [Prophet Muhammad's] description and its details. The one who does that openly is an unbeliever. He is asked to repent.

So much for the Islamophobes claims of "Muslims using taqiyyah" regarding Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Glory of God be on him).

Conclusion

Taqiyyah (taqiya, takiya) is not something to be writing home about. To use this practice to brandish Muslims as untrustworthy (or to demonise them) is unscholarly and unjust.

If you do encounter an anti-Muslim bigot on the internet crying "taqiyya" (there are plenty about), please do send him/her to this group to be educated.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HADITHS AND GOSPELS

Some Christian apologists when trying to describe the Gospels to the Muslims, claim that the Gospels are much like the Hadiths, in that the Gospels were written-collected by men, and are based on the sayings-teachings of Jesus just as the Hadiths are with the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon them both).

But in reality there are vast differences between Hadiths & the Gospels.

The main difference between the Hadiths and the Gospels is that in regards to the Hadiths, we know who actually collected the Hadiths, and we know who passed them on, and we know who actually made the original statement that was passed on. So, for example person A said something, then person B heard it and he decided to pass it on and tell other persons C-D-E, and then they passed it on to others and so forth. Basically, throughout the chain of transmission of the hadith, we know who is who, we know who is passing the story, and we know from where the original story came from, there is a complete line of transmission.

This is very crucial, because it means the reports are not anonymous, the reports are coming from people we know, names and persons we can identify, we know where they lived, when they were born, when they died and so forth. Again this is very important because if you know the person, you also know if they're reliable or unreliable, for example someone who is reporting the Hadith, a person in the chain, could have been known as a liar, as someone unreliable, someone who would make things up, and therefore we know if he is passing or narrating a Hadith that we can question the authenticity. Vice versa the person narrating the Hadith can also be known as a truthful person, someone reliable etc, and therefore we know the Hadith he passing is reliant, or it's highly likely that it is reliant.

In the case of the Gospels, we have none of this, we literally don't know who was passing the stories, they're all anonymous. Even the supposed collectors Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John, were not Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John! The Gospel accounts are all anonymous accounts written-collected by persons-authors we don't actually know, and they are narrating stories-incidents from people we don't know either, the entire chain of transmission in the Gospels is unknown and anonymous.

Basically, in the Gospel account we have the source Jesus, and then we have person A-B-C-D-E passing on the stories-teachings of Jesus, but we have no idea who these sources A-B-C-D-E are, whether they're reliable people and so forth, we literally know nothing about them. The only person who we can say with some confidence who we know about was Paul, and yet he barely wrote anything about the life-sayings-teachings of Jesus, and oddly enough in his own writings we can see that he was at odds with the actual disciples of Jesus.

So, when it comes to the Gospel of Mark, and we read all these stories and sayings of Jesus, we are reading accounts that have been passed by people we don't know, and they were collected in a book called Mark by an author we don't know either, though there is much speculation about who the exact author is. On the other hand when it comes to the Hadiths, when we read a story about the Prophet Muhammad (God's peace and Mercy be upon him), we know exactly who passed on the story and who narrated it, we have a complete line of transmission of the people who heard the saying, and who passed the saying, and who it got passed to, and we know whether these people are sound people or not.

All of this is obviously crucial, let us give an example, let's say you heard a news story, and it's a very big news story but there is no source, you're not likely going to believe it are you? Especially in this day and age when there are all kind of sources-websites on the internet that sometimes report some very crazy stories, which you then find out are false, but most times you yourself know to doubt and not believe certain news stories coming from certain organizations-websites because you know they're not reliable. And you're also aware of organizations-websites-persons that are reliable, and so you can trust what they're saying because you know who they are etc. So it's very important to know your source, if you don't know your source then as you can see you have some big issues.

Now take the same simple logic and apply it to the Gospels and Hadiths (for some strange reason people often don't like to use this simple logic, acting like we're dealing with some other realm), it's important to know our sources, who we're dealing with, who's passing on the story, whether the person passing is it a reliable person, or an unreliable person.

In conclusion, the Hadiths are a far more reliable and trustworthy collection of sayings-teachings than the Gospels, to put simple, in news terms, nobody would ever accept the Gospel as a source of information because it has no sources, all of its sources come from anonymous sources, basically people we don't know, and that my friends is not a proper source of information you can get anything from, let alone the actual teachings of God.

THE STAR AND CRESCENT SYMBOL HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH ISLAM:

The city of Byzantium (Constantinople, modern Istanbul) was dedicated to Diana, goddess of the hunt, and the crescent was the symbol of Diana. In 330 CE, Constantine rededicated the city to the virgin Mary, whose star symbol was added to the previous crescent. When the Turks took possession of Constantinople, they found lots of crescent flags and adopted it as a symbol of good omen.

"The star and crescent" was first hoisted on behalf of the Muslims by Muhammad II after the capture of Constantinople in 1453 CE. Prior to that, it was common on the arm of knight and esquires. A star within a crescent

was a badge of Richard I, 250 years before Constantinople fell. They quit using it when it became the banner of Muslims. It has been used more and more ever since by Muslims in a way to identify themselves.

INTRODUCTION

I remember that as a former Jehovah's Witness, one of the things that we were taught to always stay away from was the use of religious symbols. It was thought that this would lead to some form of idol worship that could eventually compromise our worship of the one true God. We were not permitted to wear religious icons like the cross because, in the first place, we never believed that Jesus Christ was hung on the cross. Secondly, Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe in idols and they feel that the use of these in religious worship is idolatry.

Neither could we wear anything that might be perceived as showing allegiance to a particular government, nation or political group. We could not keep a flag of any nation in our homes. We were not permitted to wear a patch of the American flag on our clothing or any of our possessions. We did not vote, sing the national anthem or recite the pledge of allegiance.

They warned that the Bible clearly states that "you shall have no other gods before me." It also states, "you shall not make for yourself any carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth."

You can imagine my concern, when, as I was embracing Islam, I became aware of the use of "the star and crescent." My concern was genuine; I did not want to offend God. I did not want to interpret that I gave allegiance to anyone except Allah. I remember asking some brothers about what "the star and crescent" symbol meant. "Oh, it's nothing to be concerned about," they said. "It just represents the Muslim." One brother, I remember, drew me a clearer picture. "Well," he said, "you know how the Christians use the cross and the Jews, the star of David? We use "the star and crescent" to identify ourselves world-wide as Muslims."

Although I didn't make it a big issue, I decided to do some research and find out for myself. I was not going to stumble over this issue, but at the same time, I didn't want to do anything that would offend God. The following is some information that I found in my research and I wanted to pass it on to you. Afterwards, I'd like to share with you an interesting view on this matter from a personal perspective and why I think it's important to consider how we view the use of the star and crescent.

HISTORY

Image: Roman silver denarius coin of Hadrian (117-128AD) with this symbol. This is a seven-rayed star within a crescent moon ...

During the Byzantine Empire, the city of Byzantium (a.k.a. Constantinople and Istanbul) was dedicated to Diana, goddess of the hunt. The crescent was the symbol of Diana. In 330 CE, Constantine rededicated the city to the virgin Mary, whose star symbol was added to the previous crescent. When the Turks took possession of Byzantium, they found lots of crescent flags and adopted it as a symbol of good omen. In 339 BC, Philip of Macedon (the father of Alexander the Great) was thwarted from overtaking the city of Byzantium because his army was spotted due to a bright crescent moon.

"The star and crescent" was first hoisted on behalf of the Muslims by Muhammad II after the capture of Constantinople in 1453 CE. Prior to that, it was common on the arm of knight and esquires. A star within a crescent was a badge of Richard I, 250 years before Constantinople fell. They quit using it when it became the banner of Muslims. It has been used more and more ever since by Muslims in a way to identify themselves. Sultan Othman, founder of the Ottoman empire, had a dream of crescent moon growing bigger and bigger until it reached East to West.

Banners or flags are what people customarily unite around or behind. It may or may not represent some characteristic about them. The twelve tribes of Israel, for example, each had its own banner or symbol, e.g. 'The Lion of Judah,' etc. An insignia could represent one's cause, philosophy, belief or attitude; whether religious or secular. The colour and the symbol's use on national flags is also most interesting. Red is the Ottoman (Turkish) colour and thus, a star and crescent on a field of red. In Mauritania, green stands for prosperity and hope. The star represents the people. On the Pakistani flag, the crescent is for progress and the star for enlightenment.

THE PROPHET'S FLAG

As to what the actual Holy Prophet used, we find some very interesting information. It has been reported that the Holy Prophet's first standard or flag was a black flag to contradict the white flag of the Quraish, who had a black eagle on it as well. The earliest such flag or banner used by the Prophet was a sable curtain which hung in the chamber of his wife, Ayesha. In the centre, the Prophet attached a white cloth which was a turban that he captured from the city of Boreide. On it was written the inscription, Nasr um min Allah, which meant "the help of Allah". Most appropriate. One can see how powerful a symbol this was to be used as a banner or flag. In modern times, some governments, like Saudi Arabia, prefer not to use the star and crescent of the Turkish government, but instead use a plain green field with the Shahadah on it in white. There is also a white sword underneath. Several modern day Muslims use the Shahadah in white on a green field as their way of showing they are Muslim. It was reported that the Prophet's favourite colour was green; which incidentally represents life.

FLAG OF SYMBOL AS AUTHORITY

But, why all this fuss about a flag or a symbol anyway? In particular, the star and the crescent? Why is it so important to search for a more profound meaning to what it means and what it stands for? Is it really that big of a deal? I mean, it's just a flag or a symbol, right?

Well, the truth of the matter is that symbols and especially flags, have more than just a casual, passing representation. They actually stand for something and have a definite meaning. A stop sign, for example, isn't there just to blend in with the landscaping. It represents the law, the authority. It requires some action from you every time you come to it and that action is to stop. It also means there is a reaction from it if you choose not to stop there and that is that you will be cited for failing to obey that sign or symbol.

THE AMERICAN FLAG

With that in mind, let's look at the flag of the United States. This is not the time to go through a two-hundred-year history of all the changes in the flag and how it got to its present form, however, since we live in this country, I think it's appropriate to understand a little about it.

The first American flag was one that had thirteen stars in a circle on a blue field with a background of thirteen alternating red and white stripes. The thirteen stars represented the thirteen original colonies that became the United States of America. Why stars? Why not thirteen trees or thirteen fish? Perhaps because a bright star is such a beautiful thing to behold. Remember the last time there was a clear night and you looked up at the sky to admire the bright starry sky? They seem so near and yet they are so far away.

Muslims appreciate stars very much because they realize that stars do fulfil many wonderful purposes. They are both beautiful and a way to guide us in a time when perhaps other navigational instruments fail us. But, as Muslims, when we look at a star or any other work of beauty, we always appreciate the Creator, Al-Khaliq, more than the creation.

As the United States added more states they added a star for each new state. Thus, today we have fifty states and also fifty stars on our flag. The stars are laid on a blue field; blue being the colour of truth. The red stripes stand for the blood that was spilled in establishing our republic. The white stands for purity, cleanliness, holiness. Put all together, one can see how easily it would be for one to perceive that these fifty states, America, is to be admired

because it was conceived with the blood of righteousness; with the purest and holiest of intentions and it stands for truth and goodness. You can trust her. You can depend on her. She will guide you to success and prosperity. See how she sparkles and shines? Follow her.

LOYALTY AND ALLEGIANCE

Some people might argue that such reasoning is absurd. That respecting the flag does not mean giving loyalty to it as you would the country or government. That it does not mean that we show the same allegiance to it that we show our country and that it certainly does not take the place of God for guidance in our lives. Reality, however, does indicate that people look at the flag and the symbols on it with more than just respect and that they do view what it symbolizes in the same manner that we've described above. Let's look at an example.

Growing up in America, I remember the first thing we did every day in school before class started was recite the Pledge of Allegiance. But allegiance to who? To our God and Creator, Allah? Well, let's see. The Pledge of Allegiance says, "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands". To demonstrate our loyalty, love, affection and allegiance to the flag and the republic or country "for which it stands", we would place our right hand over our heart. Contrary to what some people may believe, the oath of allegiance is to the country or government because the flag stands for or represents exactly that and you have just pledged your allegiance to both, the flag and the republic or country; they are one and the same. I've always admired some brothers who would tell me that when they received their United States citizenship and had to pledge allegiance to the flag, they would be pledging allegiance to Allah, instead.

Some persist in their view, however, stating that, recently the United States Supreme court upheld the decision that, burning the American flag is permissible because it is a right of expression. The burning of the country, on the other hand, would not be construed as a freedom of expression, they argue, but as an act to overthrow the government of the United States. Therefore, they cannot be one and the same according to them. The pledge of allegiance to the flag, in their opinion, is not the same as a pledge of allegiance to the country. Sounds good, but when you take into consideration the people of this country as a whole, I think you will find that the overwhelming majority feel that burning the flag is wrong and offensive to them because it represents a total disregard and disrespect to the country or government "for which it stands."

Also, consider this. If they don't mean the same thing, then, why is it that on the insignias of uniforms, cars or property of local, state or federal peace officers; or even of athletes, or anyone that represents our country, the decal or insignia is of an American flag? If they don't mean the same thing, then, why don't they have an insignia of the map of the U.S. or just the words, United States of America. Another thing. When someone, like a military veteran or government official dies, they drape the American flag over his coffin. Do they say that the individual died for his flag or gave his life for his flag? No. They say he died for his country. The reason is because the flag, symbol or insignia stands for or represents the government.

Those of us who have had the misfortune of being under colonial rule at one time, remember all too well the phrase "loyal to the Crown", meaning the British, of course. How quickly we forget. The fact is that to the great majority of people in this country, and around the world, for that matter, the flag, symbol or insignia and the country do stand for the same thing.

TWO EXAMPLES

Another thing to consider when speaking of flags and the country or people that they represent is: if a country or people separate or abolish the use of certain symbols does it necessarily mean that they have changed their views or stands on certain issues.

For example, hardly anyone can argue the fact that the 'swastika' is a symbol for what nazism stood for: a pure Aryan race and all that implies. That symbol still represents that ideology even to this day. In all fairness to the

German people, they have taken the initiative to separate themselves from such racism by changing the symbols of their flag as well as rejecting the ideology of a supreme white race.

Some will argue that the United States has done the same thing by insisting that the southern states remove and make illegal the old Confederate flag with the symbol of the 'stars and bars' because of what it once represented, namely, slavery and the oppression of black people. Some states, however, still persist in using the Confederate flag. Some people of the South are even more vocal and adamant about the continual use of the Confederate flag.

Taking the two examples just given, we see that in Germany, although it no longer supports the theory that a German white Aryan race is superior it still denies equal rights and justice to many of its citizenry, e.g., the Turkish population and others. The United States is really no better off. She has not taken sufficient steps to educate its populace on the issue of racism and tolerance and has consistently shied away from providing continual legislation that would eradicate such racism by making it absolutely illegal to act in such a manner. In fact at the present time, we see the United States reversing herself on what little legislation it once had that addressed such issues. We see with both countries, especially the US a double-tongue policy of "we're not better than you, you're just not as good as us."

In Spanish there is a saying that says, "Tanto peca el que mata la waca, como el que detiene la pata." This was a saying contrived in the old cattle rustling days. It means, "Just as guilty is he who kills the cow, as he who ties down its hoofs." If the people of a country are not willing to change the policies of its government by publicly voicing its displeasure, even going to the extent of changing its elected officials or even its form of government, if need be, then they agree with the way their country is being represented and perceived; more importantly, the way they are represented and perceived. They publicly reaffirm this perception every time they wave 'Old Glory' around. That flag and the symbols on it represent both the government as well as the people.

ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

Now, as Muslims, why should we be so concerned about all this? Well, for one thing we should never want to look to any person, nation, government or anything as a source of guidance or direction over Allah. To do so would be shirk. No one is worthy of that honour except Allah, the Almighty.

So many people all over the world put so much trust in the US for finding the solutions to their problems. The US itself brags about how it is 'the greatest nation on the face of the earth.' People in other parts of the world think it is such a great honour to be allies or associated in some way with the United States of America. There was a time when these people, especially third world countries, thought that the streets in the US were paved with gold. Anything that they can possess that is American brings a sort of prestige. I remember, a few years ago, having a visitor from Egypt. I asked if there was anything I could get for him to take back to Egypt while he was here. He decided on running shoes and a jogging suit but insisted that they be Nike's. The reason, he said, is because he would be the envy of his entire town. Anything with a designer label from the US was highly sought.

What is really sad when we see so many brothers looking to the United States as the source for relieving their afflictions. Especially where people are oppressed or seeking justice and especially, when those people are sincere Muslims. Nothing or no one take the place of Allah as our Protector; no flag, no government, no nation, not even the believers themselves.

The Qur'an says:

"Do the unbelievers think that they can take my servants as protectors besides me? Verily we have prepared hell for the unbelievers for their entertainment." (Quran Al-Kahf 18:102)

There are some enemies of Allah that feel that although they practice evil deeds, perhaps if they mingle with the true believers, they will protect them against calamity. Allah assures them that their place is in the hell fire. The Qur'an teaches us in Ash-Shura 42:9-10 that:

“It is God alone who has power over all things and that in Him we should trust.”

So, coming back to our original subject, what does all this have to do with the symbol of the ‘star and the crescent’? Well, for one thing, both symbols, the star and the crescent, come from the false worship or adoration for someone other than Allah. In the case of the crescent, it was the goddess Diana and with the star it was Mary, the mother of Jesus (‘Eesa). As much as we love and respect Mary, the mother of Jesus, peace and blessings be on her, she is not worthy of worship and she would be the first to tell you so. For that matter neither is Musa (Moses) or ‘Isa (Jesus) or even our Prophet. Nor is the Qur'an worthy of worship or the entire record of ahadith or the two Holy Mosques or the Four Rightly Guided Caliphs (may Allah be pleased with them) or anything in this universe, past, present or future. Only Allah stands alone as worthy of worship. Yet some of us carry these symbols around as an expression of identity with those very beings and are proud to associate ourselves as Muslims through them.

Some may think that this is making a mountain out of a molehill and that it's silly to think that the use of these symbols could jeopardize our relationship with Allah; but I think it deserves a lot of prayer and deep meditation and thinking about this. Do we really want to take a chance of offending Allah and facing Him on the Day of Judgement with this on our record? Is associating ourselves with these symbols or icons really worth it? We must strive to ‘always be true to Allah,’ says the Qur'an, Al-Hajj 22: 31 ‘and never assign partners to Him’.

Let us use our ability to reason and ask ourselves, is it really necessary to have an insignia or symbol to make the statement that we are Muslims? If one can so easily identify oneself as a Muslim by simply carrying the symbol of ‘the star and crescent’ around, then what's to say that the enemies of Islam can't do the same, as some of them have? I remember, my first Ramadan, one brother proudly revealed his chest to show ‘the star and crescent’ tattooed above the area of the heart. Wouldn't it be better and certainly more reliable, to identify ourselves as Muslims by our Islamic personality; demonstrating by our righteous deeds that we are of ‘those that bow to Allah in Islam’(Qur'an, Al-Baqarah 2:136)?

There are many nations and religious organisations today that identify themselves as being Muslims by the use of these two symbols, ‘the star and crescent’ and yet we can see by their deeds that they are totally un-Islamic. How easily they live among us, corrupting the word of God and causing divisions among us and all they have to do to prove they are Muslims is flash the sign of the star and the crescent.

On the other hand, there are organisations like the Red Crescent that do so much good work for their fellow mankind. Also there is a big difference between the symbol of the ‘star and crescent’ and the hilal.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, let me state that all acts are acts of worship. We all try to do the best that we can according to the extent of our knowledge and our level of Iman. Everyone has a conscience. How sensitive our conscience is toward what we have discussed depends on what we previously stated, the extent of our knowledge and the level of our Iman.

It is not the responsibility of Muslims to point the finger at each other and try to force anyone to his personal understanding of matters. Religion and especially the interpretation of matters pertaining to religion should never be forced on anyone. We all know that the Qur'an states:

“…there is no compulsion in religion...” (Qur'an, Al-Baqarah 1:190)

We know that there is nothing wrong with respecting the flag of any country. The degree to which one cares to show such respect is an individual matter of conscience. No one has the right to impose his conscience on another. But, it is important to know how some people feel about a flag, symbol or insignia. As to the use of the ‘star and crescent’ symbols, we know that Allah will judge all of us according to our niyah, our intentions, and how we choose to interpret all matters pertaining to Tawheed.

Proper attention should be given, however, to the use of a symbol or icon that at one time represented the worship of a goddess or to one that symbolises our 'godly' adoration for a righteous person whom some may place on the same plane of reverence reserved only for Allah. May Allah guide us as we search to perfect our worship of Him as He has perfected our religion. In the end we all return to Him and He will teach us what was best; for He is the best to decide as mentioned in the Qur'an, Yunus 10:108-109.

Incidentally, the 'Golden Age of Islam' that we all reminisce so passionately about came to a close about the mid-15th century with the fall of Spain and the invasion of the Mongols. This was about the same time that 'the star and crescent' started to be hoisted up as the banner or representation of Muslims. We've never been able to regain that greatness again. Coincidence??

REFUTING THE CHRISTIAN COMPLAINTS THAT RAMADAN FASTING HAS PAGAN ROOTS

Question: If Ramadan was a pagan festival in pre-Islamic Arabia, why was it included in Islamic rituals by Allah in the Qur'an?

Answer: First things first; Ramadan is not a festival. Was never a festival. It is and traditionally was an entire month dedicated to fasting in one form or another, always aimed at spiritual purification. Earliest references to fasting in authentic tradition are from Moses (Musa) and Mary (Maryam) and David (Dawud). This fasting was not limited to Ramadan, though.

Secondly, many Quraysh, the pre-Islamic noble inhabitants of Makkah were known to fast during Ramadan. Many Arab tribes had similar tradition. This shows that fasting has been observed there since the time when Abraham (Ibraheem) made Ishmael (Isma'eel alayhissalaam) to settle in the Arabian Peninsula and it also proves that fasting is the practice of the Prophets and has nothing to do with Paganist Philosophies, its rather the pagans who had adopted the practice of fasting from the monotheistic teachings.

So, we agree that,

1. Fasting is antique and not unique to one faith or region.
2. Fasting during Ramadan was observed by Pre-Islamic Arabs and Jews and Christians.

Qur'an prescribed Ramadan as month for obligatory fasting for believers, thus giving us a time and protocol for fasting. Clear orders were revealed in Chapter 2: Verses 183

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous

The verse clearly says, "Al-Lazeena – Those people before you" not people of any particular faith. This indicates that Qur'an recognized the existence of fasting before Islam. Of course, Islam gave fasting a clear goal – To Become Righteous

As an additional point, pagans; the pre-Islamic people in Makkah also observe Hajj, they prayed in their own way to the Ka'bah and did many charitable deeds. Islam did not come to abolish a culture. Islam gave humanity a clear direction for every action and deeds.

Peace!

JEWISH PROOF FOR THE EXISTENCE OF MAKKAH

There is a powerful proof that Mecca has already existed as a city in the time of revealing the Torah to prophet Moses (Musa).

[NOTE: the below info is an excerpts from my polish book entitled “Znaki i proroctwa Starego Testamentu o nadejściu Ostatniego Postańca Boga”]

Today, very few Muslims and Christians alike are aware of that Mecca – along with Medina – is explicitly mentioned by name in an early rabbinic translation of the Pentateuch. In Genesis 10:30 according to the Masoretic Text we read the following:

“And their dwelling was from Mesha, as thou goest toward Sephar, unto the mountain of the east.” [JPS, 1917]

However, the above passage according to the Judeo-Arabic translation – i.e. process of reading run as in Arabic, but the script is written with Hebrew letters – made by Rabbi Saadia ben Joseph al-Fayyumi (ca. 882-942), also known as Saadia Gaon, reads as:

Translation:

“And their dwelling was from Mecca towards al-Medina, unto the mountain of the East.” [Œuvres complètes de R. Saadia ben Iosef al-Fayyūmî, ed. by J. Darenbourg, vol. 1 (Paris: E. Leroux, 1893), p. 17.]

Everyone who is familiar with Hebrew will not contradict me in this matter (Mekka was marked with blue color, al-Medina with red color). First of all, Saadia Gaon is one of the most prominent Jewish scholars, and it is said that his translation holds an unchallengeable authority over all other biblical translations, since he was the best especially in scriptural exegesis, Jewish history and Talmudic knowledge in general, and he is responsible for the first and most important Arabic translation of the Torah which became the standard version for all Jews living in Muslim countries. Maimonides himself, a great and respected Rabbi (1135-1204) said:

“were it not for Saadia, the Torah would almost have disappeared from the midst of Israel; for it was he who made manifest what was obscure therein, made strong what had been weakened, and made it known far and wide by word of mouth and in writing.” [H. Malter, Saadia Gaon: His Life and Works, (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1921), p. 279.]

Therefore, as you can see, his translation is a primary source when it comes to the accuracy of Old Testament interpretation. As to the mentioning of Mecca and Medina in Genesis, let us recall e.g. the statement of the Rev. Professor William Paul who in his critical interpretation to the Hebrew fragment פֶּרֶם בָּקָה [#996] from Genesis 10:30, has wrote:

“mountain (mountains) of the East. These are supposed to be those mountains of Arabia running from the neighbourhood of Mecca and Medina to the Persian Gulf.” [Rev. W. Paul, Analysis and critical interpretation of the Hebrew text of the Book of Genesis, (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood & Sons, 1852), p. 100.]

Other scholars also shares a similar view. This of course explain why rabbi Saadia Gaon has mentioned Mecca and Medina in Genesis 10:30. This is not only his paraphrase concluded from the context as some might think, because if you go to the Hebrew text you will notice there such word as בָּאָכָה (baka) which was translated as “as thou goest” !

Other scholars also shares a similar view. This of course explain why rabbi Saadia Gaon has mentioned Mecca and Medina in Genesis 10:30. This is not only his paraphrase concluded from the context as some might think, because if you go to the Hebrew text you will notice there such word as **בָּאָכָה** (baka) which was translated as "as thou goest" !

יְהִי מָשָׁבֵם מִמְשָׁא בָּאָכָה הַר הַקָּדָם

On that occasion it must be stressed that the Hebrew word **מִשָּׁא** (Mesha), that precedes **בָּאָכָה**, does not stand here for Mecca as some of you would suppose. Lexicons says that this word is of foreign derivation, and there is no consensus as to whether it refers to a place somewhere in Arabia, or to a region, or to a north Arabian tribe. In any case, we have to concentrate on **בָּאָכָה** (bakah), and it would be quite preferable to remember this word in its exact Hebrew form for the next portion of information's.

The second proof which Allah Almighty let me to discover comes from a rare book called The Asatir: The Samaritan Book of the Secrets of Moses which was translated and published by Dr. Moses Gaster in 1927. This ancient document according to Dr. Moses is much older than Josephus or the Palestinian Targum, and after comparing it with the other manuscripts assumes that this book could not have been compiled later than between 250-200 B.C. In Chapter VIII of this book we read:

No comment... you have a crystal clear proof! But let's read what Dr. Moses have said in his commentary to the last fragment "Built Mecca" of the verse 3:

(there is an error in writing: instead of "neading" read "reading", the same is with "nead" which stands of course for "read". and "preservad" for "preserved", but these spelling errors are not so much significant since every English reader should not have a problem to understand the text.)

Reference: The Asatir: The Samaritan Book of the Secrets of Moses, together with the Pitron or Samaritan commentary and the Samaritan story of the death of Moses, introduction, translation and notes by M. Gaster, Ph.D. (London: The Royal Asiatic Society, 1927), p. 262.

Notice the same word **בָּאָכָה** (Baka) which can be found in the Hebrew text of Genesis 10:30 !

Mecca was mentioned among others biblical places, and so in the first and oldest book of the Torah. On the other hand, Ptolemy's Makoraba – or most probably Makkorabba as some scholars suggested – is also an intriguing issue, and it seems that this word consist of two separable segments, namely:

1. Makko = Mekka = Bakka
2. Rabba = from rabb which means in arabic "The Lord"

Based on this, it can be translated literally as "Mekka of the Lord" or "the Lord of Mekka". Such interpretation is reinforced by discovering an inscription which was engraved in one of the corners of the foundation of the Kaaba during its renovation in 605 A.D. by the people of Quraysh. The mysterious writing was composed in Syriac as relates Ibn Ishaq, and they could not understand it until some Jew read it for them. The text goes as follows: "I am Allah, the Lord of Bakka, I created it on the day that I created heaven and earth and formed the sun and moon, and I surrounded it with seven pious angels. It will stand while its two mountains stand, a blessing to its people with milk and water." [Ibn Ishaq, Sirat Rasul Allah, trans. A. Guillaume, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), pp. 85-86.]

Ibn Ishaq immediately after citing this amazing inscription have said: "I was told that they found in the maqam a writing: 'Mecca is God's holy house...'"

I believe this is the answer, because if Ptolemy by saying Makorabba has in mind a temple rather than a city it would make sense in relation to what we have just read, i.e. that Mecca according to the writing on maqam was called a "holy house of God", and in result this perfectly fits the conception about Ptolemy's Makkorabba as "The Lord of Mekka". Some scholars also have proposed the translation "The Temple of the Lord" which again leads to the same point.

Anyway, in conclusion we have at least two strong proofs directly from an ancient source showing that Mecca is a historical location and indeed existed long before Christian era, and as it is testified by ancient versions of Torah. The Christians of course will try to deny their authority as usually.

PROPHET MUHAMMAD IS "THE PROPHET" OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

JANUARY 5, 2017 ISLAMREIGNS 2 COMMENTS

As promised, the "Prophet like Moses" will be further identified as Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Glory of God be on him).

Keep in mind that during the time of Christ, the Jews were still waiting for the fulfilment of three distinct prophecies. The Gospel of John tells us:

"Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, 'I am not the Christ.' And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I am not.' 'Are you the Prophet?' And he answered, 'No.'" (John 1:19-21).

Hence the three promised luminaries are

- 1) Elijah
- 2) Christ (the Messiah) and
- 3) the Prophet.

Certainly John (Qur'anic Yahya alayhissalaam) was a prophet, just not "the Prophet". If John the Baptist is Elijah or in the spirit of Elijah and Jesus is the Christ, then who is the Prophet? The Christian will say "Jesus! (?)" He simply meshes together the Prophet and Messiah and claims that they are one and the same person. But there are three figures mentioned, not two! I quoted Harris in Chapter 4 who said: "In the original texts, neither the Mosaic prophet nor the anonymous servant (Isaiah 53) is associated with the Messiah, and we do not know whether these two unidentified figures were given messianic emphasis before the Christian period."

The "Prophet like Moses" is not the Messiah

The Christian notion that the Prophet and Messiah are the same person is completely exploded when we continue to examine the Fourth Gospel. In John 7:40 we are told that the people of Palestine, in wonderment of Jesus ('Eesa ibn Maryam), cannot agree upon his spiritual identity:

"Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet. Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the scripture said, that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? So there was a division among the people because of him" (John 7:40-43).

From this it is clear that there was a difference of opinion regarding the mission of the son of Mary and that the Jews of the first century did not believe Deuteronomy 18:18 to be a messianic prophecy. The Prophet and the

Messiah are two distinct persons, not one and the same. Yet the Christians call John as Elias (Elijah) and Jesus as the Christ as well as the Prophet? Why? Because the Prophet never came? Tell your Christian buddy, "My friend, he did come. His name was Prophet Muhammad, a Mercy unto all mankind, and you are missing the bus!" The people further reason that if Jesus is the Christ, he had to have come from Bethlehem. We read in Micah 5:2:

"But thou, Bethlehem, small as you are among the towns of Judah; from you shall arise a king (Christ) who shall shepherd my people, Israel (Micah 5:2)."

Obviously these common folk were not aware of the fact that Jesus was actually born in that city.

We are told:

"Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,) Doth our law judge [any] man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth? They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Study the scriptures, the Prophet does not come from Galilee. And every man went unto his own house" (John 7:50-53).

The Pharisees, the educated doctors and lawyers of the Torah, stress to the people that the Prophet definitely does not come from Galilee. Therefore, Jesus is not the Prophet. It's quite interesting that the Pharisees do not seem to dispute the possibility that Jesus is the Christ. This may be due to the fact that these older, more educated men might have had some sort of background knowledge of Jesus and his mother Mary and their story many years prior in Bethlehem. The Prophet, however, was to come from the Israelite brethren, the Ishmaelites, from the lineage of Kedar, not David. The argument of the Pharisees is so convincing that we are told:

"And every man went unto his own house."

Yet they are continually held in suspense regarding the question of Jesus as the Christ. In John 10:24, just three chapters later, they ask him outright:

"If you are the Christ, tell us plainly."

It seems that the Jews have collectively abandoned the idea that Jesus is the Prophet of Deuteronomy 18:18 because the Prophet is never mentioned again in the Fourth Gospel.

John further says:

"Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, 'This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.' Therefore, when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, he departed again to the mountain by Himself alone" (John 6:14-15).

Let's not forget that the crowds who saw Jesus perform his miracles were for the most part the peasants of the Jewish society. Although the works of the Messenger of God Jesus easily softened their hearts, they were by no means scholars of scripture. It becomes clear from the text that it was because they perceived him to be the Prophet that they schemed to force his earthly kingdom, the purist Islamic Kingdom of God spoken of by the Baptist and Jesus himself. Jesus knowing their error, since he was not the Prophet, departed to the mountain alone.

Apparently "Peter" (Acts 7:37) should have given his proofs as to why he thought Jesus was the one foretold in Deuteronomy 18:18, yet he is as silent as a mouse. In fact, the real apostle Peter (Shimon bar Yonah) would not make such an ignorant and erroneous statement, but Luke, being a disciple of the notorious Paul would, and has.

Apostasy in Islam.

Introduction

One of the myths perpetuated about Islam is that Prophet Muhammad (sa) forced people to accept Islam and a Muslim who denounced his faith was punished to death. This allegation is further strengthened by some simple-minded Muslim *ulema* [scholars] who hold such baseless convictions.

As we will prove in this article, this menacing tenet is based neither on the Quran nor on the practice of the Prophet of Islam.

“Holy Quran as a Champion for Religious Freedom”

Islam does not permit the use of force as an instrument for the spread of its message. The Holy Quran declares:

“There should be no compulsion in religion. Surely, right has become distinct from wrong.”
The Holy Quran, 2:257

Moreover, God Almighty outlined the role of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) as a reformer and an admonisher, and nothing more. Thus God Almighty says:

“Admonish, therefore, for you are but an admonisher; you have no authority to compel them.”
The Holy Quran, 88:22-23

“But if they turn away, We have not sent thee as a guardian over them. Thy duty is only to convey the Message. Leave it to God to make the Message effective.”
The Holy Quran, 42:49

The Quran on Treatment of Apostates

How should those who leave Islam be treated? The Quran states:

“They have made their oaths a shield; thus they turn men away from the way of Allah. Evil surely is that which they have been doing. That is because they first believed, then disbelieved. So a seal was set upon their hearts and consequently they understand not.”
The Holy Quran, 63:3-4

This verse deals with the subject of apostasy and there is no mention or even an indication of death as its punishment. In this verse, God Himself is bearing witness that some people have turned apostate. The next verses tell us that the Holy Prophet (sa) and his Companions (ra) had specific knowledge of who they were. After having such strong and certain evidence, such that God had testified to their apostasy, the Quran goes on to exhort the Holy Prophet (sa) to call such individuals to repentance and reformation:

“Come [and repent so] that the Messenger of Allah may ask forgiveness for you,”
The Holy Quran, 63:6

Despite this magnanimous attitude, the apostates followed the following course:

“...they turn their heads aside, and you see them keeping back while they are full of pride.”
The Holy Quran, 63:6

In the light of these verses of the Holy Quran, it is evident that God did not command the killing of apostates even when God Almighty, Who knows the secrets of the hearts, Himself was a witness to their disbelief, and the Holy Prophet (sa) and his Companions (ra) knew well who they were. Those apostates kept on stopping others from joining Islam. They were arrogant and proud. Despite all these factors, the Holy Prophet (sa) did not ask anyone to punish them.



A WELL KNOWN VERSE FROM THE QURAN – “FOR YOU

YOUR RELIGION, AND FOR ME MY RELIGION.” (HOLY QURAN 109:7)

“And a section of the People of the Book say, ‘Believe in that which has been revealed unto the believers, in the early part of day, and disbelieve in the latter part thereof; perchance they may return”

The Holy Quran, 3:73

If the prescribed punishment for the act of apostasy was death, then how could those described in the above verse ever have dared to suggest to their compatriots that they should join and then leave the faith of Islam, so as to turn people away from it? Did they not know that if they recanted their faith in the evening, after accepting it in the morning, then in consequence Prophet Muhammad (sa) and his Companions (ra) would behead them? This again proves that they did not have any reason to fear committing apostasy, as there was no punishment at all for it.

Prophet Muhammad’s (sa) Treatment of Apostates

“A bedouin came to the Prophet (sa) and said, ‘Please take my Pledge of allegiance for Islam.’ So the Prophet took from him the Pledge of allegiance for Islam. He came the next day with a fever and said to the Prophet (sa) ‘Cancel my pledge.’ But the Prophet (sa) refused and when the bedouin went away, the Prophet said, ‘Medina is like a pair of bellows (furnace): It expels its impurities and brightens and clears its good.’

Sahih al-Bukhari 7216

Here we have a clear example of an individual accepting Islam and then openly recanting it. He left Medina (canceling the allegiance himself). Neither the Holy Prophet (sa) nor his companions announced any sentence against him.

Islam Advocates Freedom of Conscience

“There should be no compulsion in matters of faith. Surely, right has become distinct from wrong; so whosoever refuses to be led by those who transgress, and believes in Allah, has surely grasped a strong handle which knows no breaking. And Allah is All Hearing, All-Knowing.”

The Holy Quran, 2:257

Explaining this verse, it is) stated,

“In matters of faith there is no compulsion, every person has complete freedom. No religion is given permission to convert anyone forcibly and no person renouncing a religion can be prevented by force. In addition, the proclamation ‘La Ikraha Fiddini’ (There should be no compulsion in matters of faith) alludes to an unalterable principle of human nature, that is, even if force is used it is ineffective in matters of religion because it cannot cause a change in an attitude of mind and heart. To try and do this by compulsion is a futile exercise which achieves nothing but oppression”.

God’s Plan does not Involve Coercion

The most potent argument the Holy Quran builds on the question of coercion in matters of faith is with respect to God Almighty, the Creator. If He had decided to coerce people to accept the truth, He could easily have done it without creating any fuss regarding the choice between right and wrong. The very existence of right and wrong, and the option given to man to choose between the two, presents incontrovertible proof that coercion is not a part of God’s scheme of things. God says in the Holy Quran:

“And if your Lord had enforced His will, surely, all who are on the earth would have believed together. Will you, then, force men to become believers?”

The Holy Quran, 10:100

The allegation that God forbid, the Holy Prophet (sa) ever resorted to compulsion has been negated forever through this verse. His will was identical to the will of God. This verse also contains a message for all future generations of Muslims that if they would ever promote the idea of using compulsion in religion, then they would be doing so in contravention to the will of God.

Again Allah states in the Holy Quran:

“Admonish, therefore, for you are but an admonisher; You are not a warden over them.”

The Holy Quran, 88:22-23

Referring to this verse, it is explained:

“In keeping with this inviolable principle, no Prophet ever acquired the role of coercing people to righteousness. All who dared to violate this principle in the name of God, or in the name of righteousness, must be rejected as pseudo-gods, who acquired for themselves a role which God Himself did not wield.

No true religion can be held accountable for the crimes committed in its name against human conscience. Those responsible are the so-called religious priesthood who unjustly distort the Divine teachings only to suit their own purpose at the cost of the purpose of God. They even acquire for themselves the license to kill life which is created by God. It is the Quran which comes to the defence of all such religions and exonerates them from the false allegations of their own depraved priesthood of later ages.”

Conclusion

The Holy Quran was the first religious scripture to categorically declare, “There shall be no compulsion in religion”. The Holy Quran repeatedly addresses apostasy [iii], yet man is never given authority to punish the apostate. There is not a single incident where the Prophet Muhammad (sa) punishes an individual because they apostatised. Any “punishment” an apostate incurs is a matter between that person and God. The Holy Quran is clear: apostasy is not a worldly crime, those who choose to leave Islam have every right to do so.

“Faith is, and always will be, a matter of the heart and so there should never be any form of compulsion in religion. Whilst Allah the Almighty has deemed Islam to be a complete teaching, no one has the right to forcefully convert others to it. Anyone, whether religious or not, is free to accept Islam, but the key point is that it should be accepted freely and entirely of one’s own volition and choice. Similarly, if a Muslim decides that he wishes to leave Islam, then, according to the teachings of the Qur'an, he or she has the right to do so. Whilst we believe Islam to be a universal religion and a timeless teaching, if anyone chooses to leave it then that is their choice and prerogative. In chapter 5, verse 55, Allah says that if anyone wants to leave, let them go. He will replace them with better and sincere ones. No government, group or individual has a right to punish them or sanction them in any way.

Thus, the allegation that Islam mandates punishment for apostasy is entirely unjust and without foundation

The Petra Theory of Early Islam Analysed: Reply to Holland, Smith and Gibson

By Mashhood Ahmad

NB: This article was revised on 25th March 2023, specifically in the section titled “Mecca in the Early Sources”, to better reflect the views and position of Professor Ian D. Morris in his work “Mecca and Macoraba (ref: Morris ID. Mecca and Macoraba).*

Overview of the Revisionist Theories

The Claim

Who was Muhammad (sa)? How did Islam come about? What were the events of the early religion? The mainstream academic, historical view to these answers is, by and large, the same as the Islamic narrative provided for 1,400 years. That is that an individual, by the name of Muhammad (sa), claimed in the early part of the 7th century to be a Messenger appointed by God. His revelations were compiled into a book known as the Quran after his death. His followers were persecuted during his life and fled to Medina. He fought a series of battles, culminating in the bloodless conquest of Mecca and the unification of Arabia under the new religion. A system of leadership was set up after his death known as *Caliphate* or “successorship” that operated as the spiritual and political leadership of the new empire. Under this caliphate, the early Muslims conquered the then Byzantine empire and the Persian empire, carving out what was, till then, the world’s largest empire.

None of the above is controversial in academic circles. It is the widely accepted, *mainstream* view of Islam, by non-Muslim academics.

In recent years however, a fringe view has developed. Historian Holland and other “Revisionists” present an alternative narrative to the historical origins of Islam. Setting forth his thesis, Holland wrote a book “ which is a very long and painful read. His ideas were truly popularised however, after the UK broadcaster, Channel 4, produced a documentary based on his book, titled: ‘Islam –The documentary is a good summary and exposition of Holland’s theory, covering some but not all of his points, to support the thesis that all is not what it seems with the orthodox narrative of Islamic history.

ACCORDING TO HOLLAND AND OTHERS, ISLAM WAS BORN MUCH LATER THAN THE ORTHODOX NARRATIVE, AND IN FACT, EVOLVED OVER A PERIOD OF HUNDREDS OF YEARS. ACCORDING TO HOLLAND, THE PROPHET OF ISLAM WAS MERELY A TRIBAL WARLORD WHO CONQUERED VAST TERRITORIES, NOT A RELIGIOUS LEADER. THE RELIGION OF ISLAM, HE ARGUES, WAS AN ARTIFICIAL IDEOLOGY, A CONSPIRACY CONSTRUCTED BY LATER RULERS TO UNIFY THE EARLY ARAB EMPIRE ALONG THEOLOGICAL LINES.

Holland’s thesis rests on two fundamental pillars:

Firstly, re-writing the historical narrative of early Islam. This includes arguing that the earliest biographies of the Prophet Muhammad (sa) were written some 200 years after his passing; that there is no mention of Mecca in any source until around 100 years after the Prophet’s passing; that the earliest mosques do not face Mecca; that the origins of Islam were not Mecca but further North, both on account of the agricultural descriptions given in the Quran, and also the descriptions of nearby ancient ruins.

Secondly, arguing that the Holy Quran is, in effect, a plagiarised work, based on an amalgamation of previously extant texts. For example, he claims that the metaphor the Quran gives of how Jesus fashioned clay birds into soaring, spiritual beings, was taken from a Christian apocryphal book, written centuries earlier than the Holy Quran (although Muslims believe that the original bible or injil was destroyed by the pagan Romans some traditions still was written in other commentaries by monks who tried to hold on to the monotheism of Christianity like the Ebionite Christians, also islam never claimed to be a brand new religion but as a updated version of Abrahams religion ,just the way Christianity was not a brand new religion but came to update Judaism, and that the story of Dhu'l-Qarnayn in Chapter 18 of the Quran, is a copy of the popular legend of Alexander the Great in the Alexander Romance But however the word Dhul Qarnayn in Arabic means a man who lived in through two centuries not two horns.(Dhul Qarnayn meaning two centuries). We cover these issues specifically in a separate article.

Pursuing this conception of Islam, all Islamic sources such as the *Hadith* [sayings of Prophet Muhammad], *Sirah* [biography of Prophet Muhammad], *Tafseer* [commentaries of the Holy Quran] etc., are to be ignored, since according to Holland, these were written far too late.

One fact that should not be forgotten is that Holland is a Christian, who supports the position of the Bible. He elevates the ideas and concepts introduced by the apostle Paul on numerous occasions (in his book, not in the documentary) and argues that Muslims took hundreds of years to formulate the concept of the Oneness of God, just as Christians went through centuries of debates about the position of Jesus Christ vis a vis humanity and God the Father. Among those who have sought to popularise Holland’s ideas is one Smith, a Christian preacher. Like Holland, Smith argues for revisionism of the orthodox narrative, along similar lines.

SMITH, AMERICAN CHRISTIAN EVANGELIST AND FULL TIME MISSIONARY WITH THE BRETHREN IN CHRIST MISSION, FOCUSSING ON APOLOGETICS AND POLEMICS AMONG THE MUSLIMS OF LONDON

For example, Smith argues that the first Arab inscription referencing Muhammad is in 691 CE; the first reference to ‘Muslims’ is in 690’s (referred to prior as Saracen, Hagarene, Ishmaelite, Maghraye, Muhajiroun); the first reference to ‘Islam’ is not until 691 CE; the first reference to Mecca is not till 741 CE; and that the first biography of Muhammad within Islamic sources is not until 833 (i.e. Ibn Hisham). In other parts of the series, Smith presents the work of Gibson who claims to have visited dozens of early mosques around Arabia and found that, just as Holland asserts, none of the early mosques have their Qibla pointing to Mecca, but rather, point to Petra, then to Jerusalem and then finally to Mecca.

Based on the above points and other arguments, Smith argues, like Holland, that the Quran and Islam were actually created much later, in the reign of Caliph Abdul Malik in 685CE. It was he and later Muslims who created and developed the religion to unite and to create a Prophetic tradition and history for the Arabs.

The Origins of the Theory

The above alternative versions for the history of Islam, whether advanced by Holland or Smith, are wrought with problems. Scrutiny of the issues and questions raised by them is the subject of this article.

The main problem with their theories is that they are totally contrary to an enormous body of evidence. Both Holland and Smith get around this problem only by totally ignoring whole categories of evidence. For example, their theory totally ignores the oral tradition within Islam; ignores references to the Prophet Muhammad (sa) in early documents written by non-Muslims; ignores archaeological evidence containing Islamic elements; ignores the earliest manuscripts of the Holy Quran discovered recently, such as the Birmingham Manuscript, dated to the lifetime of the Prophet of Islam. Finally, most of the claims are poorly researched and mistaken, as we shall soon see.

It should be realised that the claims of Holland and Smith would, in fact, be discounted by the very scholar with whom the “revisionist” narrative began. Indeed, much of the material Holland and Smith advance is based on the works of one Crone, who passed away just a few years ago, in 2015. She wrote numerous books on early Islam and brought the revisionist view to the forefront, with her research. Most Revisionist Historians utilise her work when presenting their evidence, but it should be pointed out that even she would not go as far as Holland or Smith. In one of her articles, she readily admits that:

“We shall never be able to do without the literary sources, of course, and the chances are that most of what the tradition tells us about the prophet’s life is more or less correct in some sense or other.”

Crone, 10 June 2008

Holland and Smith have taken her work and propelled it to a fantasy which she would not have agreed with.

This article goes through the specific “evidences” cited in favour of the revisionist narrative, claimed by Holland and Smith, and demonstrates their historical untenability.

The Grand Revisionist Conspiracy

To begin with, the theories presented by the Revisionist Historians would require astonishing levels of conspiratorial ingenuity, while the simplest theories about history are most often correct. What is easier to believe? The orthodox academic narrative, or the alternatives being told by the likes of Holland and Smith? Let’s take a look.

The revisionist narrative asserts that in 685CE, once Islam was already spread from North Africa to China and India, a single Arab political leader, Caliph Abdul Malik al Marwan, united all these nations and dynasties, into a single unified theology. Would this have been possible?

Remember that the Muslim community at the time of Caliph Abdul Malik was not unified. There was intense internal conflict; civil war had torn many nations apart, from the supporters of Uthman in Syria, who turned against Ali in Iraq and also the Khawarij who wanted all political parties destroyed. How, in amongst all this,

could the scholars from North Africa and Spain to Central Asia, orchestrate such a colossal conspiracy, which involved the creation of the Holy Quran, the practice of the five daily prayers, the enactment of Sharia Law and the concoction of the current orthodox narrative of Islam, including the Islamic view of Prophet Muhammad (sa)? As Fred Donner states in his rebuttal of the Revisionists:

"It is inconceivable that the divided and decentralized early Muslim community could somehow orchestrate a comprehensive redaction of the Islamic tradition as a whole into a unified form."

Fred Donner, Narratives of Islam, 1998, p.27

Was the Holy Quran Created?

In Islam, the unity of God is central to the religion. In fact, despite the differences between Muslims of all different stripes, there has never been any disagreement on the nature of God's Unity. In his book however, Holland argues that the early Muslims debated the Oneness of God (Tawheed) for centuries much like the Christians had done as regards the position of Christ. The latter is an embarrassment for many Christians, since it took hundreds of years and numerous councils to iron out what or who exactly Christ was. The most famous council, held in Nicea in 325 CE, saw the attendance of 300 bishops and involved a heated debate on the divine nature of Christ. One of the biggest issues was the Arian controversy, which argued that Christ was in fact created by God the Father, as opposed to the proto-orthodox position that Christ was always with God from the start, and was in fact God Himself.

Holland, the late missionary N. Qureshi and numerous other Christians like Smith, argue that the Muslims went through a similar phrase with regards to the position of the Holy Quran. Holland writes that "it would take six hundred long years of bitter and occasionally murderous argument before scholars of the Sunna could finally be brought to agree on the nature of the Qur'an: that it was eternal, not created, and divine, not a reflection of God." (Holland,p.28). However, is what Holland says here really true?

The concept that the Holy Quran was not eternal, but rather created was first debated and introduced by the Mu'tazilites, a rationalist school of Islamic theology, which flourished in Iraq in the 8th to 10th centuries. It was this group that denied the eternity of the Holy Quran. It was this group which influenced the Abbasid Caliph al-Ma'mun in 833 CE to persecute Islamic theologians who refused to accept the doctrines of the Mu'tazila:

"The caliph introduced by way of a number of letters the mihna (This was the period of religious persecution of religious scholars who conformed to the Mu'tazila doctrine; denying the eternity of the Holy Quran) proper to enforce the createdness of the Qur'an doctrine. Initially, al-Ma'mun personally interrogated seven leading jurisconsults (fuqaha'). Continuing a systematic approach, al-Ma'mun then ordered his governor in Baghdad to interrogate larger groupings of ulama. To further broaden the scope of acceptance, al-Ma'mun ordered all court officials (judges, witnesses) throughout the empire to first declare the createdness of the Qur'an before performing their duties; those who refused disqualified themselves. However, al-Ma'mun suddenly died four months after the beginning of the mihna. The two succeeding caliphs, al-Mu'tasim (r. 833-842) and al-Wathiq (r. 842-847), continued the policy with varying degrees of intensity, threatening at times opponents to the doctrine with whipping or execution. All told, the mihna lasted about fifteen years and was ended in either 849 or 851/2 by the caliph al-Mutawakkil (r. 847-861), who officially proclaimed the exact opposite doctrine—the uncreatedness of the Qur'an".

John Nawas, Minha, Introduction, 2014

To compare the above with the debate the Christians had on the position of Christ is completely unfair, since the Christian debate lasted centuries. From the very beginning, there were Christian sects or groups which did not believe in the divinity of Christ, such as the Ebionites. There were Christian sects who believed that Jesus was born as a mere man and later became the son of God through Baptism, Resurrection or Ascension; this was referred to as the 'adoptionist' belief. And then there was the proto-orthodox belief that Jesus was pre-existent, the third member of the Trinity, which was chosen in the Council of Nicea, against the Arian belief. However, even after the council, the debate did not end; ten years after the council, Emperor Constantine himself was baptised by the Arian bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia, whose views contradicted the

outcome of the Council of Nicea. After the Emperor's death, his son Constantius II, who had become Emperor of the Eastern part of the Empire, actually encouraged the Arians and set out to reverse the Nicene Creed. His advisor in these affairs was Eusebius of Nicomedia. Constantius used his power to exile bishops adhering to the Nicene Creed.

Years later, another, (the third) Council of Sirmium in 357CE represented the culmination of Arianism. The Seventh Arian Confession (Second Sirmium Confession) held that both *homoousios* (of one substance) and *homoiousios* (of similar substance) which the Nicene Creed formulated were un-Biblical and that the Father is greater than the Son, thus directly contradicting the statements of the Council of Nicea. It was only decades later when proto-orthodoxy held sway again and proclaimed the doctrine that Christ was always God; the Trinity. However, this did not stop the Arians. Professor M. M. Ninan in his work "Arianism: Who is Jesus" summarises the development of Arianism in this period as follows:

"Much of south-eastern Europe and central Europe, including many of the Goths and Vandals respectively, had embraced Arianism (the Visigoths converted to Arian Christianity in 376CE), which led to Arianism being a religious factor in various wars in the Roman Empire. In the West, organised Arianism survived in North Africa, in Hispania, and parts of Italy until it was finally suppressed in the 6th and 7th centuries. Visigothic Spain converted to proto-orthodox at the Third Council of Toledo in 589 CE. Grimwald, King of the Lombards (662–671CE), and his young son and successor Garibald (671CE), were the last Arian kings in Europe."

Arianism: Who is Jesus, M. M. Ninan

To conclude, the debate about the divinity of Christ was *far more severe, lasting centuries*, with *numerous councils*, and numerous *whole scale wars*. Compare this to the debate about the createdness of the Holy Quran, which led to *some* persecution of *some* scholars, only within *Iraq*, for a mere *fifteen years*. The concept was debated amongst the scholars for many years later, but was not a major issue. The comparison between the debates within the two faiths is therefore unfair.

The Oral Tradition

Holland and Smith completely ignore the fact that the Arabs were not a literary people, but instead, had the practice of preserving traditions through their Oral Tradition. Coming from a Christian background, it is not surprising that neither critic accepts the Oral Tradition, for Christianity has no such tradition, but actually began with a strong writing practice. The gospels and letters in the New Testament were written down relatively quickly after the departure of Jesus (within 30-70 years). However, if the criteria of hadith science be applied to the gospels, they would all be rejected outright as forgeries, the primary reason being that none of the authors or their sources are known.

Writings from Arabia?

The Revisionist historians keep asking "Why wasn't anything written down at the time of the Prophet?" or "Why did it take so long to have anything in writing?" Holland says it was 200 years after the Prophet (sa) that his biographies were written, as does Smith. There are two serious problems with this: Firstly, that biographies were written down earlier than 200 years (see the section titled "Earliest Muslim material outside the Quran" below) and; Secondly, it involves ignoring the Oral Tradition.

In fact, what we know of pre-Islamic Arabia consists of writings from *other* cultures, such as the Egyptians, Greeks, Persians and Romans. There are several inscriptions written by Arabs on stones, but we do not have any parchments or books written by Arabs prior to Islam. Dr Greg Fisher, a graduate of Oxford University and editor of Routledge writes:

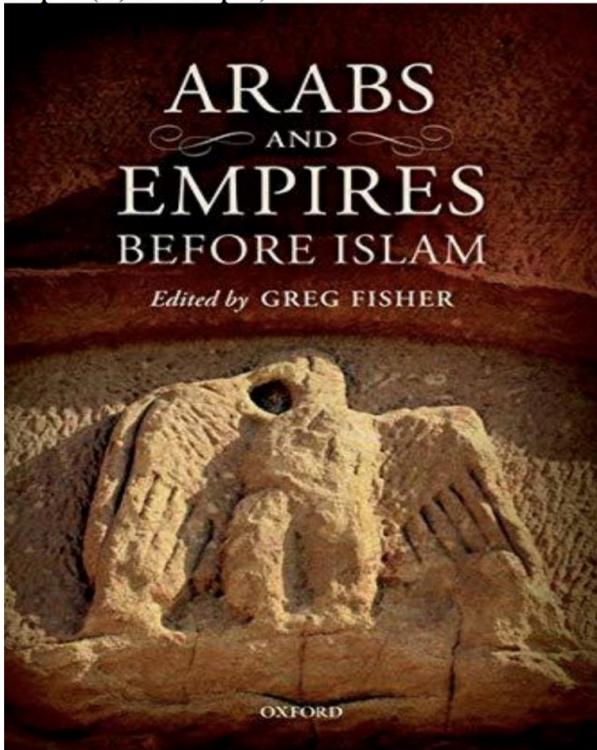
"Arabs were mostly written about by 'outsiders'... The 'inside' sources of Arabia and the Arabs, from which we might hope to obtain a corrective to these one-sided and sometimes remarkably superficial views, make up only a tiny percentage of our available evidence. They mostly comprise inscriptions and oral poetry, known from later collections."

Greg Fisher, Arabs and Empires before Islam, Oxford University Press, 2015, p.2.

This does not mean that no Arabic-speaker could read or write, rather, “for reasons we do not fully understand – culturally important matters such as religious texts, literature, genealogy, history, and so on had to be transmitted orally and were not written down.”

Ibid, p.397

The Holy Quran was, in fact, the first book written in Arabic. Hence, to argue and complain that the early Muslims did not write history, is simply unfair. They (the Arabs) never did before, why therefore should we expect them to suddenly start writing after the emergence of Islam? The truth of the matter was that they were concerned with the writing of one book, the Holy Quran, and we have ample evidence that they *did* write the Quran very early. Other works written by Muslims appear later, but note, they appear much earlier than both Holland and Smith state (see section below on Earliest Muslim Material about the Prophet (sa) for examples).



ARABS AND EMPIRES BEFORE ISLAM, DR

GREG FISHER

Holland also argues in his book that there are no early references to the tribe whom the Prophet Muhammad (sa) belonged to, the Quraysh. This again, is born out of lack of knowledge of Arab culture. Again, Dr Greg Fisher explains:

“The vast majority of pre-Islamic sources talk not about tribes, but of individuals. A discussion of tribes on the basis of pre-Islamic evidence cannot easily progress much beyond speculation since, in fact, ancient authors seemed remarkably uninterested in tribes, tribal structures, and indeed tribal society, economy, or political organizations, causing significant problems for modern scholars, who have been forced to rely on comparative studies to hypothesise about ancient tribal societies.”

Ibid p.6

Holland, a supposed scholar of ancient history, should have known this.

The Hadith

Sadly, some Revisionist Historians ignore the oral nature of the hadith collections. It is true that they were written down at least a hundred years or so after the passing away of the Prophet Muhammad (sa). However, hadiths are traceable back to the Prophet via the *Isnad*, the chain of narration.

Years after the Prophet, two types of scholars began to appear. *Firstly*, Quranic scholars who focussed on the Holy text, teaching its recitation and laws and; *secondly*, those scholars who addressed issues that were not spoken of directly in the Quran but were rather taken from the examples of the Prophet's (sa) life.

Numerous *hadiths* [sayings of Prophet Muhammad] began to surface in such numbers that scholars had to analyse them to decipher which were authentic and which were not. The main method chosen, among others, was analysis of the *Isnad*. Those who narrated a hadith were asked what its *Isnad* (chain of narration) was. In other words, *who told you about this hadith? Who told your teacher? Who told your teacher's teacher?* These chains were then scrutinised and the character and biography of each person in the chain were analysed to see whether they met the standards of a truthful person. Were they actual students of those they heard the hadith from? Did they have *ijaza* (permission) to teach the hadith? The list of criteria was long.

The hadith were classified according to the following terms: *Sahih* (sound), *Hasan* (good), *Da'if* (weak) or *Maudu'* (fabricated, forged). From then on, any hadith or even tradition, e.g. a narration of a companion of the Prophet Muhammad (sa), had to have its *Isnad* recorded as well. Scholars like al-Tabari would often record everything they heard, regardless of it being sound or weak, but include in their books the *Isnad* so future scholars could determine the validity of the story. Other scholars would only record sound (*Sahih*) hadiths, like Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim. Failure to recognise the different methodologies of different hadith compilers has led some amateur scholars to give equal credence to contradictory narratives that are actually vastly different in weight and value.

This whole system, if applied to the gospels, would classify all four gospels as weak (*Da'if*) at the very least, since no *Isnad* exists for them, i.e. no one knows *who* the authors of the gospels are; no one knows *where* they got their information from and nor does anyone know *how* they got their information. This entire system is completely ignored by Revisionist Historians.

HARALD MOTZKI – A GERMAN ISLAMIC SCHOLAR WHO WROTE ON THE TRANSMISSION OF HADITH

Numerous Western Academics have recognised the strength of authenticity of the hadith, such as David Powers (*On Bequests in Early Islam*, 1989), and the German scholar Harold Motzki (*Dating Muslim Tradition; a Survey*, 2005.) who has written numerous works in support of Hadith.

Earliest Muslim Material about the Prophet (sa)

With the fact that the Arabs did not write much taken into account (see above), the question is: are Revisionist Historians correct in stating that the earliest biographies and sources detailing the life of the Prophet (sa) were written some 200 years after his passing?

The answer is no. In fact, there are accounts of books being written very early about the Prophet (sa). The following are a selection of them:

Urwah ibn Al-Zubayr

He was the son of Asma (ra) bint Abi Bakr, and nephew of Aisha (ra) bint Abi Bakr, the wife of the Holy Prophet (sa). He studied hadith and transmitted numerous narrations from his aunt Aisha (ra). He also became one the leading Islamic jurists in Medina.

Urwah wrote many books but, fearing they might become sources of authority alongside the Qur'an, destroyed them on the day of the Battle of al-Harrath. He later regretted that, saying "I would rather have them in my possession than my family and property twice over." He is also known to have authored one of the first writings in the area of the biography of Muhammad, known as the Tract of Seerah. This has only survived though Ibn Ishaq.

Malik ibn Anas

Born in 711 CE / 93 AH and died in 795 CE / 179 AH. He is known as Imam Malik; he was one of the leading Muslim jurists, theologians and hadith scholars of his time. He was born in Medina, where he spent the rest

of his life learning all about the Prophet (sa) and Islam from the companions of the Prophet (sa) himself. He was one of the first to compile hadith, in his famous *Muwatta*, in which he collected 1720 hadith that he deemed authentic out of the 100,000 narrations available to him. Of note, this work was written around 100 years after the Prophet's (sa) passing away. The hadith in this book are considered sound by most Muslims around the world. This work is completely ignored by the Revisionist historians, most likely because they knew only of the most famous hadith collection of Imam Bukhari, which came about 200 years after the Prophet (sa).

Ibn Ishaq

He was born around 704 CE/ 85 AH and died around 760 CE/150 AH. He was born in Medina and spent much time collecting material in the form of oral traditions about the life of the Holy Prophet (sa). His work was collected by two of his students: al-Bakka'i, whose work perished, and Ibn Hisham, through whom his work survived. Another student, Salamah ibn Fadl al-Ansari, collected the work of Ibn Ishaq, but sadly his work too has perished; however, much of it has been retained by al-Tabari in an unedited version. For example, al-Tabari contains the controversial story of the Satanic verses and many other controversies, which was omitted by Ibn Hisham. The latter seems to have cared more about the Isnad and authenticity of his work than al-Tabari.

This work was written and was in circulation about 100 years after the Prophet (sa). This too is ignored by Revisionist historians.

Al-Waqidi

Born around 747 CE/ 130AH and died in 823 CE/ 207AH. He was a historian and his major work is known as the *Book of History and Campaigns*, which describe the battles fought by the Holy Prophet (sa). Again, this work was written within 200 years of the Prophet's (sa) passing away and is ignored by Revisionist historians.

Earliest Non-Muslim Material about the Prophet (sa)

Both Holland and Smith complain about the fact that the non-Muslims around Arabia do not seem to refer to those following Islam as 'Muslims'. They rather refer to them as Ishmaelites, Saracens, Hagarenes etc., but never Muslims, and for this reason, they (the Revisionist Historians) argue that Muslims did not exist at the time of the Arab expansion.

The point is absurd and again is based upon pure ignorance. The Christians during the time of the expansion of Islam did not call them *Arabs* either, but rather used the above terms. Are we to say that Arabs therefore were not involved in the Arab expansion?

On the topic of why the Christians used different terms initially for the early Muslim expansion, Harald Motzki states:

"Both the Old Testament and extra biblical literature, such as the book of Jubilees, made several brief references to the Ishmaelites, who appear there as desert nomads usually associated with tents and camels (e.g. 1 Chron 7:30)...Josephus identifies the Arabs as Ishmaelites in order to help explain why the Arabs practise circumcision in the 13th year after birth... A number of Christian authors relied on Josephus, and followed him in his identification of the Ishmaelites with the Arabs. The Romans had a long interest in mapping the histories of the peoples who lived around them, and the Roman Christians in the empire carried on this tradition."

Dating Muslim Tradition; a Survey, 2005, Harald Motzki

For Christians, this was important and significant since in the letters of Paul within the New Testament, the author had linked the Ishmaelites to those who were under the Law, as opposed to those born under grace (Gal 4:21-31). Thus for them, it was always important and significant to remind themselves that these people in Arabia were 'Ishmaelites'. "Consequently, when the Arabs appear in Christian sources, it is usual that they were cited for their practises – similar to the Jews – and to whom pieces of the Law either seemed to apply or were picked up by Ishmaelites because of their historical associations with Ishmael and Abraham." (Ibid, p.368)



THE BIBLE – A HOLY BOOK FOR CHRISTIANS AND

JEWS

‘Saracen’ first appears in reference to a distinct group living on the Sinai Peninsula and north-western Hijaz, in the *Geography* of Ptolemy (5.16; 6.7.19). Centuries later, this term began to be used more and became synonymous with the Ishmaelites (Eusebius, *Onomasticon*, 6.7). Just a little later, the Christian monk Jerome writes: “Through his female slave Hagar, Abraham fathers Ishmael, from whom come the race of Ishmaelites, later called Hagarenes and finally Saracens.” (Jerome, *Chronical 87*) These three terms began to become fluid and interchangeable and the norm amongst the Christians. It was for this reason that they continued to call the early Muslims by these terms. It took them several decades to get out of the habit and call them by their new identification; that is, Muslim.

When analysing opinions on the enemies of a group, we have to be careful and aware of strong polemical descriptions. However, certain points can be deciphered. For example, that the enemy (in this case, the Muslims) were led and united by a Prophet, who taught them and brought a new book, which they followed. Can we decipher such matters as would point to the religious origins of the Arab expansion, in the writings of early non-Muslim sources?

Doctrina Jacobi (Teachings of Jacob)

This is a Greek Apologetic work supposedly composed in Africa around 634 CE. This work speaks of a Prophet appearing among the Saracens, who is criticised for coming with the sword. It is clear the work is composed by a Christian, influenced by a pacifist understanding of the teachings of Jesus. We know this because it is unlikely that a Jewish author would criticise a prophet for taking up arms, since the Prophet Moses (as) ordered fighting in battle (Exod 17) and was promised by God that the Jews would “chase their enemies, and they shall fall by the sword” (Lev 26:7-8). Scholars have argued that the above report was most likely used to dissuade newly baptised Christians from gaining hopes that they would be saved by this Prophet. (R. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It*, 1997, p.58).

Regardless of the opinion of the writer, what the above text does indicate is that the Arab invasion of the Byzantine and Persian Empires was as a result of the appearance of a man who claimed prophethood. This is a text emerging almost immediately after the death of the Prophet Muhammad (sa).

Fragment on the Arab Conquests

On the front of a 7th century Syriac manuscript of the Gospel of Mark, there are a few scribbles about the Arab conquest. Much of it is faint but the following can be read:

“In January {the people of} Hims took the word for their lives and many villages were ravaged by the killing of {the Arabs of} Muhammad (Mahmud) and many people were slain and {taken} prisoner from Galilee as far as Beth... On the twenty-sixth of May the Saqila{ra} went { ... } from the vicinity of Hims and the Romans chased them.”

, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It*, 1997, p.117

This source directly mentions the Prophet, by name. It was a custom at the time for people to write notes of what they witnessed. Numerous scholars have argued that this note was most likely to have been written at

the time of the invasions, dating to just a few years after the Prophet's (sa) passing away (, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It*, 1997, p.117).

Thomas the Presbyter

This 8th century manuscript is housed in the British Museum, and contains what is argued to be the first reference to the Prophet (sa) outside of Muslim sources, with more certain dating than the previous Fragment. It contains an account of the Battle of Dathin which took place near Gaza in the spring of 634 CE:

"In the year 945, indiction 7, on Friday 4 February (634) at the ninth hour, there was a battle between the Romans and the Arabs of Muhammad in Palestine twelve miles east of Gaza. The Romans fled, leaving behind the patrician bryrdn (sic)..... The Arabs ravaged the whole region."

Thomas the Presbyter, Chronicle, 147-48

Again, it was the Arabs of Muhammad who invaded the lands, not just ordinary Arabs who came out of Arabia rather randomly and destroyed two of the most powerful Empires of the world as Smith and his Revisionists argue.

Homily on the Child Saints of Babylon

There was much devotion for three saintly youths who apparently refused to worship the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar, centuries earlier. Their tale was widespread, and one Coptic homily uses their story to inspire Christians to avoid and resist the Arab Muslim invasion. He concludes with the following passage:

"As for us, my loved ones, let us fast and pray without cease, and observe the commandments of the Lord so that the blessing of all our Fathers who have pleased Him may come down upon us. Let us not fast like the God-killing Jews, nor fast like the Saracens who are oppressors, who give themselves up to prostitution, massacre and lead into captivity the sons of men, saying: "We both fast and pray." Nor should we fast like those who deny the saving passion of our Lord who died for us, to free us from death and perdition."

Homily on the Child Saints of Babylon, §36 (tr. de Vis, 99-100)

While the account does not mention the Prophet, it does mention some interesting traits of the invaders (the Arabs). They fasted and prayed. It is highly unlikely that the Arabs of Arabia prior to Islam fasted and prayed in a similar fashion to the Jews and Christians. As far as the dating of the Homily, it is argued that the Arabs were criticised for their enslaving and killing rather than their rule and taxation, which hints at a very early stage in the conquests. (Robert Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It*, 1997, p.121)

Gabriel of Qartmin

Gabriel was a Bishop who supposedly met the Second Khalifa, Umar (ra), when the latter conquered much of the Persian and Byzantine Empires. In a work composed on the Life of Gabriel, the latter is said to have done the following:

This lord Gabriel went to the ruler of the sons of Hagar, who was 'Umar bar Khattab, in the city of Gezirta. He ('Umar) received him with great joy, and after a few days the blessed man petitioned this ruler and received his signature to the statutes and laws, orders and prohibitions, judgements and precepts pertaining to the Christians, to churches and monasteries, and to priests and deacons that they do not give poll tax, and to monks that they be freed from any tax. Also that the wooden gong should not be banned and that they might chant hymns before the bier when it comes out from the house to be buried, together with many [other] customs. This governor was pleased at the coming to him of the blessed man and this holy one returned to the monastery with great joy.

Scholars argue that it is likely that Gabriel met with a Muslim General or even the Khalifa himself and managed to negotiate the tax concessions for monks and priests. (Robert Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It*, 1997, p.123) Either way, this is one early document speaking and naming the Second Khalifa of Islam, Umar (ra).

Sebeus, Bishop of Bagratunis

For years, an anonymous untitled history of Armenia was composed, starting from events in the 5th century up to the Arab-Muslim invasion in 661CE. It was generally accepted to be composed by Sebeus, a bishop of the house of Bagratunis, and is said to have been written around the 660's CE. Later, the association of this

document with Sebeus was discounted; however, for ease of identity, numerous scholars still name the document after Sebeus, despite knowing full well that he was not the author.

The whole account “concludes with Mu’awiya’s ascendancy in the first Arab civil war (656-61), and the above points would suggest that the author was writing very soon after this date.” (Ibid, p.125) The author speaks of events which happened in Jerusalem, and is the only Christian writer to note that four parties were involved in the first Arab civil war: one in the east (‘Ali), one in Syria and the north (Mu’awiya), another holding Egypt (general rebels), and the fourth holding “the country of the Arabs and a place called Askaron.” And he continues: “Those in Egypt and Arabia united and killed their king (‘Uthman), pillaged the royal treasures and established another king (‘Ali),” which fits what we know from Muslim writers of the coalition between the Egyptians and the Medinese. (Ibid, p.128)

Sebeus also informs us of some of the beliefs of the Muslims, particularly the teachings of the Prophet (sa), stating:

“He (The Prophet) legislated for them not to eat carrion, nor drink wine, not to speak falsely, and not to commit fornication.”

Ibid

Thus we have very early non-Muslim testimony on the early Islamic historical events, which closely resembles the Islamic traditional account and goes completely against the absurd conclusions of Revisionist historians.

A Maronite Chronicler

A Syriac manuscript housed in the British Library, contains an interesting chronicle, based on that of the Church Historian Eusebius and covers events from Alexander the Great up until the 660’s. It is the final two fragments of this manuscript that are particularly interesting, as they cover events of the life of Muawiya (ra) in Jerusalem and Damascus. What is most interesting is that the chronicle states:

“Mu’awiya did not wear a crown like other kings in the world. He placed his throne in Damascus and refused to go to the seat of Muhammad.”

Ibid, p.136

Thus again, we have manuscripts dating to the time of the Arab conquests, that agree with the Muslim historians and explicitly mention the Prophet (sa).

The above are just a handful of the early non-Muslim documents that speak of Islam, often mentioning the Prophet (sa) by name or title. All these early sources go heavily against the theories presented by Revisionist historians, which claim that Islam as a religion was a later concoction to unify Arab conquests, not having any root in contemporaneous historical sources. Thus far, it seems that all the early sources about Islam, be they Muslim or non-Muslim, add no support to historians like Holland and Smith, but rather wholly discredit their wild theories.

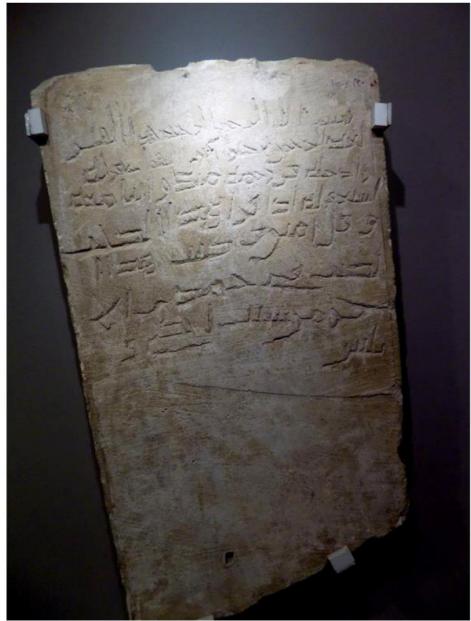
Early Inscriptions Containing Islamic Formulas

Revisionist historians argue that there are no Islamic references during or immediately after the Holy Prophet (sa). As explained already in the previous sections, the Arabs were not a people who used to write. Having said that, there still exist numerous inscriptions from shortly after the passing away of the Holy Prophet (sa) showing that the religion of Islam existed much earlier than the dates proposed by the Revisionist historians.

Tombstone Of ‘Abd al-Rahmān Ibn Khair al-Hajrī

A tombstone dating to 31 AH / 652 CE. This is some thirty years after the passing away of the Holy Prophet (sa). On the tombstone, it is written in Arabic:

"In the name of Allāh, the Gracious, the Merciful; this tomb belongs to 'Abd al-Rahmān Ibn Khair al-Hajrī. O Allāh, forgive him and make him enter into Thy mercy and make us go with him. (passer by) When reading this inscription ask pardon for him (the deceased) and say Ameen! This inscription was written in Jumada II of the year one and thirty."



TOMBSTONE OF 'ABD AL-RAHMĀN IBN KHAIR AL-HAJRĪ, FROM 31 AH / 652 CE

This tomb is in Cairo, Egypt. It begins with the typical Islamic formulation *Bismillah*, and requests passers-by to seek forgiveness for the one buried, as is typical for a pious Muslim to ask. It was the belief in the hereafter which resulted in the above request for prayers on this inscription. Such a request would have been meaningless had there been no such thing as Islam at the time of writing.

Jerusalem 32 – An Inscription Witnessed By Three Companions of Prophet Muhammad (sa)

This is an inscription which was unearthed in Jerusalem by Professor Benjamin Mazar of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1968. The original inscriptions, plaster copy and photographs still exist. This has been dated to 32 AH / 652 CE. The translation of the Arabic inscription is difficult to decipher, but reads as follows:

"In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

.....

.....

the protection of Allah and the guarantee of His Messenger.

.....

And witnessed it 'Abd al-Rahmān bin 'Awf

al-Zuhrī, and Abū 'Ubaydah bin al-Jarrāḥ

and its writer – Mu'āwiya....

the year thirty two (?)."

Similar to the tombstone inscription, this too begins with the Islamic formula *Bismillah*. This is an extremely early reference to Allah and the Prophet (sa) together. Not only that, but it also refers to three of the companions of the Prophet by name: Abd al-Rahman bin Auf, who passed away in 31AH, Abū 'Ubaydah bin al-Jarrāḥ, who actually passed away in 17AH, and Mu'āwiya. Therefore the inscription may possibly be referring back to an earlier document, which was witnessed by these companions.

Revisionist historians need to explain who the ‘Messenger’ is in the above inscription if the Prophet Muhammad (sa) had not existed as per orthodox Islamic history, or had not founded the religion of Islam.

The Inscription Cursing the Murderers of Uthman (ra)

This inscription was discovered in Saudi Arabia dating to 36AH, that is 656 CE. (F. Imbert, “*Califes, Princes et Poètes Dans Les Graffiti du Début de l’Islam*”, *Romano-Arabica*, 2015, Volume 15, pp. 65-66 and p. 75) The translation of the inscription is:

“*I am Qays, the
scribe of Abū*

*Kutayr. Curse of God on [those]
who murdered ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān
and [those who] have led to the killing
without mercy’*

The inscription supports the orthodox Islamic history laid out by al-Tabari, who writes about the murder of the third Caliph in the year 35AH. Again, Revisionist historians need to explain or produce an alternative version of events, which resulted in the martyrdom of a man called Uthman ibn Affan, and why people in the year 36AH were cursing people who had committed the crime.

It would be absurd to think that Muslims such as al-Tabari, hundreds of years later, created the story of early Islam, the Caliphate and the civil wars. If they wished to create their own history like Smith insists, why on earth would they create a story about civil unrest? Why would they create a narrative of rebellion against Holy Caliphs? The inscription above fits in perfectly with the history presented by al-Tabari and early Muslim historians.

There are a number of other inscriptions written in similar periods showing the absurdity of the Revisionist theories.

Mecca in the Early Sources

Revisionist historians like Holland and Smith have argued extensively that there is no reference to Mecca prior to Islam, nor is there any reference to Mecca for at least 100 years after the Holy Prophet (sa) passed away. Smith goes further and presents numerous ‘maps’ in his videos, showing all the trade routes, none of which apparently go through Mecca. Conveniently for him, the viewers do not know where these maps came from (he never tells them where they are from).

Are these ‘historians’ correct? No. It should be remembered that the Arabs rarely wrote anything about themselves; thus information about the Arabs and even very early Islam was either oral or through the writings of non-Arabs (see section above titled ‘Earliest Muslim Material about the Prophet’ for more details).

However, there is one major reference prior to Islam of Mecca, that being in the writings of Ptolemy, a second century Greco-Roman geographer who mentions in his work *Guide to Geography* a number of places in Arabia. Among the names is Macoraba – Ptolemy spells it Makoraba in Greek, but Latin translations prefer Machoraba and Macoraba – which Ptolemy places in the west of the Arabian Peninsula.



THE CITY OF MECCA – MAKKAH AL-

MUKARRAMAH

While historically there has been consensus that Macoraba is Mecca in Orientalist scholarship, Crone, who is the ultimate source of both Holland's and Smith's perspectives, broke with this tradition. In her work "she asserts that the evidence that they are the same is of poor quality. Her dissenting perspective has received support, most notably, from I. Morris from the University of Amsterdam, who penned a lengthy and detailed article about Ptolemy's mentioning Mecca. While he recognises the consensus in academic scholarship that Macoraba is Mecca (*Mecca and Macoraba*, p. 3.), he traces the roots of this to an accomplished mid-seventeenth century Hugenot pastor and Orientalist scholar, Samuel Bochart (d. 1667). Morris provides this earliest quote of Bochart, stating that Mecca and Macoraba are one and the same: (*Mecca*)...in Ptolemy is Macoraba, i.e. *מִקָּה רַבָּה* 'Mecca rabba' or 'great Mecca.'

Mecca and Macoraba, p.12., Ian D. Morris; quoting: Samuel Bochart, *Geographia Sacra*, 2 vols. (Caen: Petrus Cardonellus, 1646), vol. I, Phaleg, 242; cf. 137, 237.

Crone's fundamental argument is that the translation of "rabbah" as "great" is a Hebrew derivation. In addition to this, she reduces the significance of Mecca as a node in the trade network, to justify the title "great". Her fundamental argument was that an Arabic derivation was required to justify "Macoraba" as "Makkah rabbah". Morris quotes recent scholarship, namely, Bukharin and Bowersock, against her views. However, Morris concludes that Crone's demands for an Arabic derivation stands, citing an absence of a known Jewish community in Mecca in the period preceding Ptolemy, which would justify Bochart's interpretation of Ptolemy's statement on the basis of a Hebrew, not an Arabic, construct.

Morris' paper is important because it delineates the contours of different perspectives clearly, and enables future scholars to investigate this area more. Morris' fundamental conclusion is that Macoraba *may yet* be Makkah rabbah – Mecca the Great – however, in his view, despite the continuity of a part of the name, greater evidence is required to establish the specific genealogy and transmission of this term – "rabba" – from Arabia to Egypt, in Ptolemy's time.

Thus, it is clear from Morris' paper that there is ongoing disagreement in academic circles on the question of Ptolemy's reference to Macoraba, though the consensus for several hundred years of Orientalist scholarship was that Ptolemy's "Macoraba" refers to Mecca. Indeed, one benefit of Morris' paper is that, though he recognises the validity of Crone's arguments, he does an excellent job of providing an historical timeline of the evolution of the link between Macoraba and Mecca, and the genealogy of this idea in orthodox Orientalist scholarship over several hundred years. While there may be dissenting voices against that historical consensus today, the *flat rejection* of Holland and Smith, without qualification, that there is *no mention* of Mecca prior to the coming of Islam is incorrect, given their failure to reference the consensus view that existed for several hundred years, or the ongoing discussion in this academic field relating to Ptolemy's statement.

Finally, Christian Revisionists should perhaps look at their own traditions before attacking others'. The birthplace of Jesus was purportedly a city called Nazareth, but while being mentioned in the gospel of Luke, there is no other reference to it until around 200 CE when Sextus Julius Africanus, cited by Eusebius

(Church History 1.7.14), speaks of Nazara as a village in Judea. Does this mean that the city or village never existed?

Do Early Mosques Face Mecca or Somewhere Else?

Holland in his documentary is apparently shown one of the earliest Mosques in existence and is told that its *Qibla* is not facing Mecca. Smith too presents numerous slides in his video, showing more than a dozen early mosques, arguing that the earliest ones in fact faced the city of Petra, a city north of Mecca, before turning to face Jerusalem a few decades later, and finally turning to face Mecca.

Smith's slides are based on the work of Gibson, who claims to have travelled around the Middle East visiting these mosques. He has authored a number of books, and claims that the Quran hardly mentions anything of Mecca, and that early mosques in fact faced Petra. On the basis of this, he claims that Islam was born in Petra.

David A. King, a retired Professor of History of Science and Director of the Institute for the History of Science, Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main, has written numerous books and academic papers on Islamic mosques and Qiblas. His first degree was Mathematics (1963) followed by studies in Near Eastern Languages and Literatures and the History of Science. For two decades he was the director of one of the two leading centres in Europe of research on the history of Islamic astronomy and mathematics. He is more than qualified to speak on this subject.

King wrote a damning critique of Gibson's work titled "From Petra back to Makka – From 'Pibla' back to Qibla" in September 2017 for the Muslim Heritage website. Afterwards, in 2018, he wrote an even longer paper against Gibson titled "The Petra fallacy – Early mosques do face the Sacred Kaaba in Mecca but Dan Gibson doesn't know how". Both papers are freely available online.

Gibson quotes the work of King in several places in his own books, yet King notes that Gibson quotes him poorly and often out of context. He attacks Gibson's work, saying it is no better than a 1st year college student's work, also noting that Gibson has no formal academic training. King writes:

"Gibson completely misunderstands my findings on the determination of the Qibla and mosque orientations. Essentially I found that the Muslims for the first two centuries used folk astronomy, particularly astronomical horizon phenomena, the cardinal directions and solar risings and settings at the solstices. Thereafter they also used Qiblas based on geographical coordinates and mathematical procedures. I claim that all mosques face the Qibla in ways most of which we can only now understand. I also say that early mosques do not always face the directions we moderns think they should."

From Petra back to Makka – From 'Pibla' back to Qibla, David A. King

King notes that the early Muslims used folk astronomy to determine the *Qibla*, which was "devoid of theory, and based solely on what one can see in the sky." (David A King, *Astronomy before the Telescope*, British Museum Press, 1996, p.144) King seeks to demolish the absurd theory of Gibson that the early Mosques faced Petra (a theory which Smith, basing his work on Gibson, also advocates). King argues that it was not possible, due to the absence of "necessary technical equipment – trigonometry, geometry, geographical coordinates, astronomical instrumentation – to derive the direction of Petra accurately for any locality from al-Andalus to China. Since this equipment in fact became available to the Muslims in Iraq only in the late 8th and early 9th century, Gibson's attempt to fabricate the evidence for an earlier epoch falls flat." (Ibid) In fact, King is so critical of Gibson, that he writes:

"My present intention is simple: it is to warn the unsuspecting reader that the only other person ever to have written generally on the subject of mosque orientations:

- (a) has no qualifications to correctly interpret the available data;*
- (b) has no understanding of the fact that MODERN (sic) directions from one place to another cannot be used to investigate the reasons underlying the orientation of PRE-MODERN (sic) architecture;*
- (c) seems oblivious to the fact that there is well-established discipline called archeoastronomy and has no understanding of astronomical alignments;*
- (d) has erred monumentally in his interpretation of mosques that were built on pre-existing religious architecture or to fit with pre-Islamic city plans;*
- (e) has no understanding of how mosques were laid out over the centuries;*

(f) has no control over any of the numerous medieval Arabic sources – legal, astronomical, folk astronomical, and mathematical, geographical – relating to the determination of the *qibla*; and
(g) prefers to refrain from citing the vast existing bibliography on the subject.

Worse still, he

(g) has settled on a nice-enough locality, Petra, as the focus of early Islam where in the early 7th century there were no Arabs, no Muslims, and no Jews, and, in brief, there was not much going on.

And worse than that,

(h) both his activities in a field which he does not master and his false conclusions have already contributed to somewhat dubious causes.”

David A King. *The Petra fallacy, Early mosques do face the Sacred Kaaba in Mecca, but Dan Gibson doesn't know how*, 2018, p.9) (sic)

Gibson is not intentionally trying to deceive his audience, according to King. King believes that he is genuine, in that he genuinely believes he has made this ground-breaking discovery; that Islam originated from Petra, that the Nabataeans were the original founders of Islam. Even though “not a single historian of Nabataean history, language, religion, architecture or culture has come out with any item of information that would give credence to this breaking news about Petra” (Ibid, p.12)

Smith follows suit with Gibson and in fact argues that while Petra was not the capital commercial city of the region, it was the capital religious city of the region. He firmly believes that not only was the original Ka’ba in Petra, but so was the black corner stone originally there, and that the original Muslims (even though he argues they were never called that to start with) all worshipped there and towards there, like the followers of so many other pagan religions. However, he (and Gibson) fail to understand that “in the early 7th century it (Petra) had long ceased to thrive and it appears to have been more or less deserted.” (Ibid)

King explains how early Muslims calculated the *Qibla*:

“Before the 9th century Muslims used exclusively tradition and folk astronomy – notably, astronomical risings and settings – to find the *qibla*. Early Islamic religious architecture, however, was often laid out in accordance with the foundations of pre-Islamic religious edifices. The general direction of Makka, as indicated by the road leaving a given location toward Arabia, would sometimes suffice.”

From Petra back to Makka – From ‘Pibla’ back to Qibla, David A. King

It was in the 9th century when the Muslims began to use more complicated geographical and mathematical techniques to determine the *Qibla* for their mosques, resulting in improvements in accuracy after about 200 years of the Prophet (sa).

Smith, in his lengthy video, presents over a dozen mosque examples which he argues point to the city of Petra, and others facing Jerusalem. These are all taken from Gibson’s book. King does not bother going through them all, but comments on a few of the mosques as follows:

- The Umayyad Mosque of Damascus: Gibson claims that this mosque faces (the modern direction of) Petra not (the modern direction of) Mecca. He further claims that it was deliberately laid out towards Petra, and accurately at that. He overlooks the important fact that it was built on a Byzantine basilica, which had replaced a Roman temple that was cardinally aligned (aligned to north, east, south and west). This is why it appears to face Petra, since within the limits of the exercise, Petra is roughly due south of Damascus. The Muslims built their Mosque and were simply happy that it ‘faced’ the northern Syrian corner of the Kaaba, as indeed it does. (David A King. *The Petra fallacy, Early mosques do face the Sacred Kaaba in Mecca, but Dan Gibson doesn't know how*, 2018, p.23)
- The Huaisheng Mosque, Great Mosque of Guangzhou: This mosque Gibson dates to 627 CE. This date is not based on any solid evidence and modern scholars do not find any evidence of the supposed tradition that a companion of the Prophet (sa) came to China this early. Gibson states that the Mosque faces Petra, or is at least 3 degrees from Petra and 7 degrees from Mecca. King asks how could the Muslims at such an early date possibly know where Petra exactly was? Did they really know about great circles on the terrestrial globe? They did not! They had no such tools or mathematical knowledge at that time. It was purely based on folk astronomy and the sight of summer sunset, which makes it point towards Petra.

- **Mosque of 'Amr in Fustat (Egypt):** Gibson does not give the orientations of the Mosque, but states that it faced Petra. King argues that “This contradicts medieval sources which say that the qiblat al-sahâba, “the qibla of the Companions of the Prophet, was toward winter sunrise” which does not point towards Petra.
- **The al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem:** This mosque, which he dates to 709CE., faces (according to Gibson) 183 degrees. Petra is 194 degrees while Mecca is 161 degrees. King again argues the early Muslims could not accurately know these calculations, but simply made most of the mosque face south, which was the rough direction of Mecca, resulting in sometimes the mosques facing Petra to some extent, depending on the location of the mosque.

King goes through more examples and simply argues that the early Mosques could not possibly have known accurately the direction of the *Qibla* and often used the winter solstice sunsets and sunrises. Accurate techniques were invented centuries later.



MUSLIMS FACE TOWARDS THE KAABA FOR PRAYER,

LOCATED IN THE GREAT MOSQUE OF MECCA (MASJID AL-HARAM). THE DIRECTION TOWARDS THE KAABA IS KNOWN AS THE QIBLA

King then moves onto Gibson's credentials, or lack thereof, for that matter. He examines the bibliography provided by Gibson in his works and notes that it lacks almost all academic works on astronomy and geography within early Islam. He mentions how none of the “articles dealing with orientations of Islamic religious architecture are cited,” and that, “Not a single study of Islamic folk astronomy is included.” In fact, most works relevant to the topic at hand have not been consulted, and most of the works cited in the bibliography are irrelevant, as are many in the footnotes.” (*From Petra back to Makka – From ‘Pibla’ back to Qibla*)

To conclude, it is fair to say that the scholarship of Dan Gibson and his techniques to show that the early Muslims worshipped facing a *Qibla* that was apparently in Petra, are extremely weak and blatantly incorrect. It is a shame that Holland and Smith advocate for Gibson's weak arguments, but this does not really come as a surprise. Their academia is barely any better than his. A cursory glance of some academic works on the same topic would have thrown his whole work out.

Quranic References Pointing to an Origin Outside Mecca

Holland in his video and book argues against Mecca being the birthplace of Islam. He cites several reasons, which are worth discussing:

1. Agriculture is spoken about in the Holy Quran, yet there was no agriculture in Mecca, since it is a desert environment.
2. The Prophet Lot's (as) cities are spoken about in chapter 37, verse 138. These cities (Sodom and Gomorrah) were believed to be destroyed by God, and the pagan Meccans are said to ‘pass by them in the morning and night’. Holland argues that these cities were 1000 km north of Mecca.
3. There are several places named in the Holy Quran; such as Ad, Thamud, Midian. These are three civilisations in Northern Arabia and nowhere near Mecca.

With regards to the first point about agriculture, Holland infers that the audience of the Holy Quran were *only* the people who lived at the time of revelation, in the locality of the revelation. He assumes that if the verses were revealed in Mecca, then it was *only* applicable to the Meccans. This is not the interpretation of any Muslim commentator, past or present. The text of the Holy Quran is applicable to *all* people, throughout time. Yet, even if this was not the case, while in Medina, the Prophet taught Muslims the same verses as he

had in Mecca, and in Medina, the people were farmers! But even if the Meccans were not farmers, it does not mean that they were oblivious to where the fruits and vegetables they were consuming came from. They traded with agriculturists and farmers, so of course they understood the Quranic text which spoke of it. The second point relating to the story of the Prophet Lot (as) is equally erroneous. Holland argues that Sodom and Gomorrah were 1000km north of Mecca. This however is contradicted by some. “Sodom and Gomorrah were situated on the highway from Arabia to Syria where the Arab caravans passed by day and night.”

Finally, there is the third point, as to why the locations of Ad, Thamud and Midian, being in Northern Arabia, were mentioned in the Quran despite their relative geographical distance from Mecca. The answer is relatively simple: Who said Northern Arabia was far? By whose yardstick? Holland’s? The Quran speaks of many Prophets sent to further reaches of the world, such as Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus etc. (peace be upon all of them). Most of the Prophets mentioned in the Holy Quran are also mentioned in the Bible and most of these Prophets did not reside in Mecca. Prophet David (as) did not reside in Mecca, but was further north around Jerusalem, likewise was his son Prophet Solomon (as). Prophet Jonah (as) lived in Ninevah (now northern Iraq). Prophet Jesus (as) lived in Galilee, hundreds of miles north of Mecca. Why take exception to the mention of Hud (as), Saleh (as) and Shuaib (as), the Prophets to Ad, Thamud and Midian, respectively, if one is not going to take exception to other prophets mentioned in the Quran, who preached in further reaches of the Middle East? In fact, the prophets Hud (as), Saleh (as) and Shuaib (as) were situated closer to Mecca than the Biblical prophets were. Holland’s bias shines through here; he does not take exception to prophets mentioned in the Bible, further from Mecca, because he presumes their mention in the Quran is copied from the Bible.

Should not Revisionist Historians perhaps argue that since the Quran speaks of Prophet Jesus (as) it originated from somewhere in Galilee? Or that since the Quran speaks of Prophet Jonah (as), it must have come from Nineveh, or maybe Jerusalem since it speaks of Prophet David (as)? Why not Egypt since it speaks of Prophet Joseph (as)! The allegation is absurd: the Quran speaks of Prophets in and around the vicinity of Arabia, as well as of those further afield too, such as Prophet Luqman (as) or Prophet Adam (as).

Archaeology in Mecca and Medina

Holland and Smith both argue the case that there is no archaeological evidence of a civilisation in Mecca prior to Islam. Smith goes so far as presenting pictures of the constant construction in Mecca and states that archaeologists have been prevented from doing any digging, to cover up the fact that there exists nothing. It is all part of the grand conspiracy, and that in fact Islam originated in Petra, rather than Mecca.

It is true that archaeologists are prevented from digging in and around the holy sites in Saudi Arabia, and that there are in fact construction projects which are destroying many of the historical sites associated with Islam. But it is not for the absurd reason presented by Smith and co.

Wahhabi Destruction of Holy Cities

In the early 1800s, the Saudis under Abdul Aziz ibn Muhammad ibn Saud attacked and captured the Shia holy cities of Karbala and Najaf in Iraq. They destroyed their holy shrines, such as the tomb of Imam Hussain (ra). A few years later, they captured Mecca and Medina and began the destruction of the holy tombs there as well, such as the edifice built over Fatimah (ra), the daughter of the Prophet (sa). They even expressed desires to destroy the tomb of the Prophet (sa) himself, thinking that it was idolatrous to visit it. However, pressure from Muslims across the world stopped them.

In the early twentieth century, more attacks and demolitions took place. Some reports have it that since 1925, the Government of Saudi Arabia has destroyed about 98 percent of religious and historic sites in the country (“Mapping the Saudi State, Chapter 7: The Destruction of Religious and Cultural Sites,” Americans for Democracy) The government has destroyed numerous mosques, graves, and shrines of religious, historical and cultural importance in Jeddah, Medina and Mecca, including the site of the battle of Uhud (United Nations, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Communication regarding the destruction of sites of religious, historical and cultural importance in Saudi Arabia, Al, 14 October 2015). Again, the destruction of these sites is linked to the religious views of the government, which oppose any visiting of graves and shrines of Islamic historical figures, primarily to prevent what they perceive as idolatry. Domes covering the numerous graves of the family of the Prophet (sa) and his companions (ra) were demolished,

along with the graves of the companions martyred in the Battle of Uhud. The home of the Prophet's wife Maria (ra) and the birthplace of their son Ibrahim (ra) were also destroyed at that time.

The twenty-first century saw even more demolition. The annual pilgrimage to Mecca results in millions of Muslims descending on Mecca and the authorities deem it necessary to demolish the old neighbourhoods in favour of building large towers, restaurants and shopping centres. In fact, the government has recently turned the house of Khadija bint Khuwaylid (ra), the Prophet's first wife, from a library into a row of toilets for visitors to the Grand Mosque. Further destruction is planned for the expansion of the Grand mosque.

This is the very brief history of the reasons for which archaeologists are not permitted in Mecca and why old artefacts are not found in and around Muslim-controlled Arabia. It has absolutely nothing to do with Smith's argument, namely, that the authorities know or fear nothing will be found. It is all linked to their extreme stance against any veneration of Islamic historical artefacts or sites.

Islamic Coinage

Some Revisionist Historians argue on the basis of the earliest Islamic coins. Smith for example argues that it was Caliph Abdul Malik bin Marwan who initially created his own Arabic coins.

These are the coins (Byzantine gold dinars) Smith is referring to (see below).

These coins were being used by the Muslims prior to Caliph Abdul Malik since the Muslims themselves had not minted any of their own. One can clearly see the Emperor and possibly his two sons on one side and the Christian Cross on the other side.

The first phase of the transformation of the gold coins was this: only one side was modified; the Christian cross was removed and replaced with a sphere. And around it was written 'Bismillah' meaning "In the name of Allah".



A few years later, further modifications were made; the removal of the Emperor and his family, replaced by an image of the Caliph. The other side maintains the pillar and sphere.



Finally a year or two later, the images were completely removed from the coins and replaced by the Arabic text: "There is no god except Allah alone, He has no partner; Muhammad is the Messenger of God whom he sent with guidance and the religion of truth that he may make it victorious over every other religion." And on the other side: "God is One, God is the Eternal. He begets not, neither is he begotten."



It cannot be stressed enough how poorly Smith portrays these coins. The pillar with a sphere on top somehow appears to Smith as a Christian cross. Smith argues that these are the first Muslim coins; no surprise, he's wrong. The first Muslim coins found are actually silver coins dating to the time of the third Caliph Uthman of around 652 CE:



Uthman modified the existing silver coins of Yazdgird III, The only difference was that Bismillah was added to the edge of the coin.

Other Points

Revisionist Historians argue for an alternative beginning of Islam. Most academic historians who agree with Revisionists will argue that Islam began somewhere north of Arabia, while Gibson and Smith argue that it was specifically from the Nabatean Petra. There are quite a few points that have not been mentioned that cast serious doubt of the origins of Islam being in Petra:

1. No Nabatean scholar or historian has ever come close to even hinting at the same conclusion (David A King. *The Petra fallacy, Early mosques do face the Sacred Kaaba in Mecca, but Gibson doesn't know how*, 2018, p.12)
2. The Quran speaks of idol worship and animals sacrifices amongst the opponents of the Prophet. However, the Byzantines had forbidden both idol worship and animal sacrifice long before the Prophet's time—including in their province of Arabia Petraea (Nicolai Sinai, *The Qur'an: A historical-critical introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017) 61)
3. Both Gibson and Smith argue that the account recorded in al-Tabari suggests that it was Ibn al-Zubayr who relocated the *Qibla* from Petra to Mecca in 70AH. They argue that Ibn al-Zubayr took the black stone from Petra and moved it to the new headquarters in Mecca. However, the only thing al-Tabari says is that Ibn al-Zubayr took with him "many horses and camels and much baggage" to Mecca. It seems that Gibson and Smith believe that the black stone was part of Ibn al-Zubayr's luggage! To begin, had Ibn al-Zubayr's trip represented a communal move and relocation of the Black Stone to Mecca, why would his enemies not have reversed it upon his defeat? Furthermore, al-Tabari never mentions Petra in his entire history (see Mark Anderson, *Is Petra Islam's true birthplace—or Mecca?*).
4. A major question which requires a serious answer is how on earth did Muslims manage to replace the birth-place of Islam in Petra with Mecca in Saudi Arabia and not leave a dot of evidence in the oral and written records?

Gibson and Smith answer this question by stating that Petra was formerly called Mecca, thus at one point in time there were two Meccas (Gibson, book p.14). The primary source of this for Gibson is the testimony of a

9th-10th century Christian historian named Thomas Artsruni, who wrote that Muhammad had preached in Mecca, located in “Arabia Petraea Paran.”

However, Thomas locates Mecca, not in the city of Petra at all, but only in the Byzantine province of Arabia Petraea, specifically in its Paran region—in Sinai. The main reason for him doing so is because Muslims have argued Mecca to be the site at which Hagar and her son Prophet Ishmael were left by Prophet Abraham. The Bible states that Paran is the location where Hagar and Prophet Ishmael were dropped (Gen 21:22), thus it makes sense for Thomas to mistake Mecca for Paran.

Furthermore, Revisionist Historians argue that early Muslims did not record this *Qibla* move in the hadiths because they wished to cover up this fact. This is unfeasible, since the spread of Islam at this time was immense, from Spain all the way to China! How could *all* Muslims in the empire cover up this enormous event or change? Also, Muslims were not united at this time: Sunni, Shia and Khariji were fighting constantly for power. How could it be possible for them to unite on this change, and for what purpose?

Conclusion

We began the overview of the Revisionist Historians' position with a review of the arguments in their literature and their documentary/video production specifically by Holland and Smith. At first presentation, their arguments can be shocking and rather nerve-wracking. Both videos can be compelling, with the authors speaking with such confidence, backed up by numerous 'facts'. However, when analysing these 'facts', it becomes clear very quickly how they fall apart.

It is for this reason that the vast majority of Islamic academics, both Muslim and non-Muslim, have discarded the research of many of these Revisionist Historians. It is a shame that the vast majority of proponents of this absurd theory are Christian missionaries. Given the scarcity of any historical evidence for almost anything in the Bible, not least the total anonymity of the Gospel authors, it is better suited for such as Holland and Smith to stop throwing stones from their own very fragile glass houses.

REFUTING THE FALSE ALLEGATION THAT PROPHET MUHAMMAD FABRICATED THINGS AGAINST GOD:

Some pathetic non-Muslims use unreliable quotes from unreliable books. They quote the following from Al-Tabari's book:

"I have fabricated things against God and have imputed to Him words which He has not spoken." MUHAMMAD (Al-Tabari 6:111)

Response: This is in fact such a weak and stupid argument made by some Christians and they desperately and shamelessly use it to disprove the prophethood of Muhammed.

For starter, who is Tabari ?! Tabari was an exegete (mufassir) & an HISTORIAN (for understanding the scholars rules on historical reports read: Difference between Ahadith Narrations & Historical Reports), so he does not verify the narrations as we will read in the introduction of his history book.

Anyway, Islamic historians would simply compile all the known narrations about a certain event, regardless of how authentic or reliable each of those narrations were. They would copy the Isnads (chains of transmitters) into their books, in order that the Muhadditheen (scholars of Hadith) could determine which narration was Sahih/Hasan (authentic/good) and which was Dhaeef (weak) or even Mawdoo (fabricated). In other words, the historians compiled the narrations, and the Muhadditheen authenticated them. Therefore, based on the above, we find that Tarikh at-Tabari is simply a COLLECTION OF NARRATIONS on certain events; some of these narrations are ACCURATE, whereas others are NOT. The authenticity of each narration depends on the Isnad (chain of transmitters): if the narration was transmitted by reliable narrators, then it would be accepted as valid, but if it was transmitted by unreliable people, then the narration was to be disregarded. Tabari says in a disclaimer in the introduction of his book:

“I shall likewise mention those (narrators) who came after them, giving additional information about them. I do this so that it can be clarified whose transmission (of traditions) is praised and whose information is transmitted, whose transmission is to be rejected and whose transmission is to be disregarded...The reader should know that with respect to all I have mentioned and made it a condition to set down in this book of mine, I rely upon traditions and reports which have been transmitted and which I attribute to their transmitters. I rely only very rarely upon (my own) rationality and internal thought processes. For no knowledge of the history of men of the past and of recent men and events is attainable by those who were not able to observe them and did not live in their time, except through information and transmission produced by informants and transmitters. This knowledge cannot be brought out by reason or produced by internal thought processes. This book of mine may contain some information mentioned by me on the authority of certain men of the past, which the reader may disapprove of and the listener may find detestable, because he can find nothing sound and no real meaning in it. In such cases, he should know that it is not my fault that such information comes to him, but the fault of someone who transmitted it to me. I HAVE MERELY REPORTED IT as it was reported to me. (Tareekh at-Tabari, Vol.1, Introduction)”
[<http://www.ahlelbayt.com/articles/islam/tabari>]

So this quote is a LIE against Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Glory of God be on him), not just that, but there were many lies invented by the hypocrites from among the Jews in order to REJECT prophet Muhammed. The people were certain that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was the awaited one and to defend themselves, the hypocrites from the Jews invented such lies.

Inventing lies is not a big problem for the liars, this is their job. For example, the Prophet once recited some Surahs (verses from Qur'an) to the pagans in Makkah and prostrated to God Almighty at the end. The pagans who were speechless at the beauty of the recitation also prostrated. When the news spread to the leaders of the pagans, they were upset and were looking to take action against those pagans who had prostrated. In order to defend themselves, those pagans lied that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) had said good things about their false gods. The lie was made to defend themselves.

If these Christians feel that the hypocrites were telling the truth and he really praised the pagan gods, then he must also accept the hypocrites around Prophet Jesus (Peace and Glory of God be on him) who claimed the same for Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him).

Just like the hypocrites invented lies against the Prophets of the Old Testament (sinners, rapists, killers, incest performers, idol worshippers, nudists etc), they invented lies against Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) but the difference is that Muslims have rejected these hypocrites and have thrown them of their books .

Another thing, Muhammed (Peace and Glory of God be on him) was SINCERE, and he was called” The Trustworthy” and “Truthful” before his prophethood, so how can he fabricate things on God, doesn’t make any sense, does it ?!

Christians’ conclusion that Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Glory of God be on him) had Satan behind him just reminds one of the story of Lazarus when Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) raised him from death by the permission of God Almighty. The hypocrites around him stated that “the devil was behind him”. Such allegations have been labelled at Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as well and it is no surprise at all.

So this argument that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) openly said that he lied is just PATHETIC and CHILDISH as can be seen. Making use of the weakest of weak narrations is the job of the HYPOCRITES.

I bear witness there's no god but Allah, and Muhammed is his final messenger.

RESPONSE TO THE MORONIC CLAIM THAT THE BLACK STONE IS AN IDOL & PILGRIMAGE A PAGAN RITE

Let us examine closely the square-structured Ka'bah (The Holy House) at Makkah, in Arabia, wherein in its Eastern corner lies the Black Stone set up chest-high. Every pilgrim in Makkah tries to kiss and caress it fondly, the first thing upon arrival there.

This action marks the start of the act of Tawaaf. The word "Tawaaf" is an arabic infinitive noun which means to circle, compass or move around something.

A pilgrim has to circle the Ka'bah seven times, to complete Tawaaf. Each one of the seven rounds begins by kissing or caressing if possible, or by simply pointing at the Black Stone. The Black Stone thus, serves to mark the start of each round. Tawaaf is one of the integral parts of Pilgrimage (Hajj), which is also performed, as a separate act of worship at any time. Thus we find the Ka'bah continually being circled by people day and night.

THE REAL IMPORTANCE OF TAWAAF

Circumambulating the Ka'ba and kissing the stone are in fact considered the Tawaaf's outer aspects, apart from its inner significance. They resemble something like the standing, bowing, prostrating and sitting postures observed in the daily Islamic prayers. Yet, the prayer postures, as well as the circling around the Ka'bah coupled with kissing, both form the outward shell of the chaff, which preserves the grain. The grain of the Tawaaf lies in the lofty meanings of the Pilgrim's recitation and prayers, in the soul-stirring emotions surging in his heart – such as his extreme love for Allah Ta'ala, his awe of Him, and his high hopes in Him. Examine, for instance, the words brim-full of God's oneness, which the pilgrim utters. It is his regular formula, at the start of each round of the Tawaaf, as he kisses, caresses, or points at the Black Stone, declaring: "(I begin) in the Name of Allah who is Most Great. O Allah! (I perform) believing in thee, confirming Thy Book, fulfilling Thy Pledge, and following the Way of Thy Prophet, Muhammad – Blessing and peace upon him!"

As such, the Tawaaf around the Ka'bah is done solely in the Name of the One Supreme Allah, and that it is never done in the name of any other deity, nor for the Black Stone itself, as others allege. The operation of Tawaaf is in compliance with the Holy promise the pilgrim has committed with His Lord. He does it as a believer in the One God, not as an idolater, but as a conformer of Allah's revealed Books, and as a follower of His Prophet [Peace and Glory of God be on him (i.e Peace be upon him)]. Far from worshipping the Stone, the Pilgrim is kissing it, or pointing at it, just as was done by the Prophet (Peace and Glory of God be on him) in his time.

GLORIFYING THE ONE GOD

Find out, how the pilgrim goes on glorifying Allah the most High, while performing the rounds, with these noble hymns:

"Glory be to Allah! All Praise be to Allah! There is no deity save God. Allah is Most Great! There is no handling, nor power, save by Allah's Help."

A Monotheist (One-God worshipper) holds these sublime prayers far more valuable than the earth's entire riches. With these, he praises his One and Only Lord, as he circles a spot made Holy by the presence of His House. Is there any remotest trace of Polytheism (multi-god worship) or Idolatry in such an act??

A SELECT PRAYER

As he has left all his worldly affairs behind, the pilgrim, besides praising Allah, also goes on praying for his worldly betterment, in between. Here is his all-embracing prayer to Allah, the Benevolent:

“O Allah! make me content with my appointed lot, and bless me therein. And make good to me all, my losses and needs.”

THE TWO-WORLD PRAYER

Unlike unbelievers, the pilgrim has a living faith in the coming, eternal hereafter. He does not fail here, therefore, to say the best possible prayer man could ever ask. It is from the Qur'an itself, and combines both the good of this world and the world to come in his supplication as follows:

” O Lord! Bestow upon us the good in this world and the good in the hereafter. And save us from the torment of the fire” [Holy Qur'an 12:201].

COULD A STONE BE GOD??

Although so reverently kissed and caressed during the Tawaaf, the Black stone, in one of the corners of the Ka'bah, is no graven image for the pilgrims to worship. That is the last thing any One-God worshipper could ever imagine.

For a stone is just a mere stone after all. It has no power whatsoever to do good or inflict harm to any one, apart from Allah, the Sole Deity of mankind. That is a thing cherished either knowingly, ignorantly or figuratively – by those who take to stone-worship instead of God-worship, a belief and practice as unholy as it is senseless. This is why the Black Stone becomes a mystery to such people, and so, some out of ignorance openly charge that Prophet Muhammad [Peace and Glory of God be on him (Peace be upon him)] did break every Idol in Islam except one – meaning the Ka'bah, or the Black Stone. Why, even unwitting Muslims get easily confused about the Black Stone. It was hence that 'Umar (radhiyallahu amhu) the second Caliph, did well to remove this hidden doubt from the mind. So when he came to kiss the Stone, he cried out publicly to it:

Narrated 'Abis bin Rabi'a: 'Umar (God be pleased with him) came near the Black Stone and kissed it and said, "No doubt, I know that you are a stone and can either harm anyone nor benefit anyone. Had I not seen Allah's Messenger (Peace be upon him) kissing you, I would not have kissed you. [Summarized Sahih Al-Bukhari, Al-Hajj, page 396 No. 808 on the Black Stone]

TRUE STORY OF THE BLACK STONE

More than five thousand years ago today, the father of the prophets, Prophet Ibraheem (Biblical Abraham) [alayhissalaam (i.e Peace be upon him)] the Upright (Haneef), had built the present structure of the Ka'bah under Allah's own orders. He [Alayhissalaam (Peace be upon him)] had built it along with his youthful son, Isma'eel (Ishmael) [alayhissalaam (Peace be upon him)], forefather of the Arabs. This is how the Qur'an describes their building it together:

“And (remember) when Ibraheem (Abraham) and (his son) Isma'eel (Ishmael) were raising the foundations of the House (the Ka'bah) at Makkah, (saying), 'Our Lord! Accept (this service) from us. Verily! You are the All-Hearer, all Knower.'” [Qur'an 2:127].

The father and the son, true Monotheists (Muslims), were thus raising the foundations with trembling hearts, for the Muslims are Allah's most devoted servants, ever fearful of his displeasure. While building the Ka'bah, therefore, both of them were afraid that Allah may not accept their humble service, hence that prayer of theirs. How touching of such fidelity, how moving of such humility towards Allah the Creator and King of the Universe! It is the essence of Monotheism, the ideal pattern of Faith and Actions, great and small for all Muslims to follow. When raised to a certain height, Ibraheem [alayhissalaam (Peace be upon him)] ordered his son to choose a piece of stone to mark the main corner-point. Even as the lad was searching for it, the Archangel Gabriel (Jibreel Alayhissalaam) appeared with the Black Stone from Heaven. Prophet Muhammad [Peace and Glory of God be on him (Peace be upon him)] said:

“The Black stone descended from heaven, when it was whiter than Milk, but people’s sins have blackened it”.
[Tirmidhi, Kitab Al-Hajj, the Black stone]

Ibraheem [Abraham (alayhissalaam) (Peace be upon him)] took it up and fitted it in, and there it stands up to this day. It is a heavenly stone, then, and not an earthly one. It was selected by Allah for His Holy House (the Ka’bah).

TEACHING THE PILGRIMAGE RITES

The building thus finished, this is how Ibraheem and Isma’el [alayhimussalaam (i.e Peace be upon them)] went on further praying to Allah, in the next Verse;

“Our Lord! And make us submissive unto you and of our offspring a nation submissive unto You, and show us our Manasik (all the ceremonies of Pilgrimage – Hajj and Umrah etc.) and accept our repentance. Truly, You are the One Who accepts repentance, the Most Merciful.” [Qur'an 2:128].

Thereupon Allah taught them through revelation the pilgrimage rites, which includes the Tawaaf.

IS KISSING THE BLACK STONE ESSENTIAL?

We have known the working procedure of the Tawaaf, it consists of circling around the Ka’bah seven times. Each circle begins by kissing the Black Stone, or by caressing it, which is its normal procedure. But Tawaaf is not a one-man business, hundreds, even thousands, are circling the Ka’bah at one and the same time. How could each person kiss the Black Stone separately?? Naturally, when so over-crowded, the kissing will have to be dispensed with by some or many of them. At such times it is quite enough therefore, to face the Black Stone from any distance, and only point at it by one’s right hand, at the start of each round. The pilgrim then recites his formula and proceeds on.

HISTORY UNFOLDS A RARE ASPECT

Assuming that the Black Stone is missing for one reason or another, does it render the Tawaaf and Pilgrimage invalid and void on such account?? Absolutely not. This is exactly what has already happened in the history of Islam.

The Karamathians (Arabic: al-Qaramitah), the most un-islamic sect in Islam, had removed the Black Stone during their mad merry-making in the year 317 AH/980 AD. They carried it away with them to their territory in Al-Ahsa (in the Arabian Gulf). After keeping it there for twenty years, they had returned it back to Makkah in the year 339 AH [see shorter Encyclopedia Leiden 1953, P. 219].

In such an event, the Shari’ah (Law) maintains that the pilgrim shall perform his Tawaaf without the Black stone. Instead of the Black Stone, the pilgrim shall touch its place at the corner of the Ka’bah, or point at its spot, and continue his Tawaaf. Thus the total absence of the Stone itself makes no difference in the validity of the Tawaaf and the Pilgrimage. This shows how tiny a part is being played by this stone. How ignorant of others and how childish, therefore, sounds the charge of Islam-haters that it is the “most Precious Idol preserved by Islam”!

DOES KISSING THE BLACK STONE MEAN WORSHIPPING IT??

Kissing a stone is not a sign of its worship at all. Kissing the Black Stone cannot be twisted into an idol worship, for the stone is no image, just as mere kissing is not worshipping by a mere imagination. Anyone might allege that Muslims do worship a certain ‘idol’. But the fact remains that they do not worship anything save God, the One. The idol and its worship simply do not exist.

The Bible is kissed in law-courts; does that mean then that it is worshipped?? Moreover, parents kiss their children lovingly, without any trace of worship in it at all.

A big question-mark that should come to one's mind are the pre-Islamic Arab idolaters who had held the Ka'bah. With all their polytheism and idolatry, they too used to circle the Ka'bah and kiss the Black Stone. Had their kissing been an act of idol-worship, why then was there still a need for them-despite the presence of the "almighty" Black Stone-to install three hundred and sixty idols therein??

This proves beyond a shadow of doubt that it is one thing to kiss the Black Stone under Divine Orders, and quite another to worship a stone or an idol. Most notable, perhaps, is the fact that One-God worshippers do nothing beyond simply kissing the Black Stone. They neither venerate it with folded hands, nor kneel down, nor prostrate themselves, nor squat before it. For all these is done only by idol-worshippers before their idols.

IS THE PILGRIMAGE A PAGAN RITE??

Some non-Muslims out of hatred or other ill-intended motives, think or are made to believe that the Pilgrimage to Ka'bah is purely a pagan rite or one form of idol-worship. That it was being practiced by the Arab idolaters before Islam, and that Islam borrowed it from them. This assumption is further aided by the fact that the Ka'bah itself had been a temple housing no less than three hundred and sixty idols. Nevertheless, this is a pure conjecture belying facts and figures. For it was not the idolaters of Makkah, but Prophet Ibraheem [Abraham (Peace be upon him)], who had initiated and established the holy Pilgrimage thereof, ages ago.

On the contrary, it was these very idolaters, the degenerate descendants of Ibraheem (Abraham) and Isma'eel (Ishmael) [alayhissalaam (Peace be upon them)], who had defiled Allah's Holy Ka'bah into a huge pantheon. It was these rank idolaters who had injected pagan rites into the purely Islamic Pilgrimage laid down by Prophet Ibraheem (Abraham) [alayhissalaam (Peace be upon him)], one of the greatest worshippers of God. [we had posted an article related to this: How Idols found place in the Ka'aba during Pre-Islamic Era??]

All honour is due to prophet Muhammad [Peace and Glory of God be on him (Peace be upon him)], the seal of the Prophets and the last of Ibraheem (Abraham's) [alayhissalaam (Peace be upon him)] line of Prophethood, who first swept clean the Holy Ka'bah from its heathen idols. It was he again who restored the original pilgrimage to its pristine purity.

The Muslims, are in fact the true followers of the Religion of prophet Ibraheem (Abraham) [alayhissalaam (Peace be upon him)], the ancestral grand-father of Prophet Muhammad [Peace and Glory of God be on him (Peace be upon him)], where pilgrimage to Makkah is a notable heritage as well as an important fixture of the religion. How different could these facts be from the Non-muslims' random conjecture?

BUILDING THE HOUSE AND PROCLAIMING THE HAJJ

This is how Allah declared to Prophet Ibraheem (Abraham) [alayhissalaam (Peace be upon him)] regarding his Sacred House after showing him the site thereof:

"And Remember when We showed Ibraheem (Abraham) the site of the Holy House (the Ka'bah) at Makkah saying : Associate not anything in worship with Me, [La Ilaha ill-Allah (none has the right to be worshipped but Allah – Islamic Monotheism], and sanctify My House for those who circumambulate it, and those who stand up for prayer, and those who bow and submit themselves with humility and obedience to Allah), and make prostration in prayer." [Qur'an 22:26].

Ibraheem (Abraham) [alayhissalaam (Peace be upon him)] is being himself ordained in this verse to keep perfectly away from idolatry. He is being told, as well, to sanctify the House of God from all kinds of impurities, especially from that of idol-worship.

Then follows the two-fold purpose for which that House was being built. First, is its being the center of Tawaaf for those who compass it round, and its being the prayer-place for those who pray therein their daily Prayersm Second,

this is as much as to say that the Tawaaf and the Pilgrimage do depend upon the house of God, as much as do the prayers.

For this reason all those who pray all the world over do turn in the one direction of the Ka'bah at Makkah. After being ordained to build and sanctify God's Ka'bah, Prophet Ibraheem (Peace be upon him)] receives in the next verse the command to proclaim the Pilgrimage to the Ka'bah, in this manner:

“And proclaim to mankind the Hajj. They will come to you on foot and on every lean camel, they will come from every deep and distant wide mountain highway to perform Hajj.” [Qur'an 22:27].

That definitely proves that it was Ibraheem (alayhissalaam) who built the Ka'bah, and that it was also he who proclaimed the Pilgrimage, facts that should equally refute the oft-repeated allegation put forth that pilgrimage was some pagan rite invented by the heathen idolaters, and retained by Islam.

HIGHLIGHT OF PILGRIMAGE

Initiated by Ibraheem (Abraham) [alayhissalaam (Peace be upon him)], and reflected by the Seal of the Prophets (sallallaahu alayhi wasallan), Pilgrimage to the House of God is a unique experience to every true Muslim.

For a “Muslim” is essentially the one who shifts from the false to the true Religion – from disbelief to Belief in True God, and from multi-god to One-God worship. This trait made Abraham (Peace be upon him) a “Perfect” Muslim when he entered the Pantheon at Babylon, and smashed the idols therein to pieces. Allah entrusted him with building His House at Makkah, and tasked him to proclaim the Pilgrimage to it.

Henceforth, Pilgrimage to the House of God becomes the most predominant trait of being a Muslim. A haven of absolute freedom, and a sanctuary of perfect peace and security, this Holy Mosque is the only spot on Earth set up by Allah for one and all the people alike, without any distinction. It is the House of God wherein all men are equal, none being entitled to own it exclusively. This is told in these words of Allah:

“...and from Al-Masjid-al-Haram at Makkah which We have made open to all men, the dweller in it and the visitor from the country....” [Qur'an 22:25]

The message of this Surah 22, verses 26-27 named “The Pilgrimage” itself, is describing the construction of the Ka'bah and its sanctification, it being the focal point of Tawaaf as well as the center of Prayers. Thus, the incumbency of Pilgrimage to this “first house of One-God worship”, etc. Verses 28-37, do contain the basic elements of the Monotheistic religion of Prophet Ibraheem (Abraham) [alayhissalaam (Peace be upon him)], wherein one of the main objectives emphasized is the need to celebrate the Name of Allah Alone over the animal-whether ordinarily slaughtered, or offered as sacrifices to Allah, as against those offered to the idolaters’ idols, as evidenced particularly by verses 28, 30, 34, 36 and 37. “Avoiding the abomination of idols”, and “neglecting the word that is false” (telling and witnessing falsehood), these two cardinal sins, have been specially prohibited in Verse 30. But the crowning message of unparalleled importance is the commandment: “Hunafa' Lillah (i.e. to worship none but Allah), not associating partners (in worship, etc.) unto Him...”, which is the soul and the heart of Monotheism (one-God worship), and the annihilator of all Polytheism (multi-god worship).

This last, but not the least message, is the essence of Pilgrimage, as also the top-most concern and happiness of every Muslim. The Makkan idolaters too, used to perform the Pilgrimage, calling themselves thereby as “Haneefs” (followers of Ibraheem alayhissalaam). And therefore, Muslims are being told to perform the Pilgrimage, and call themselves as “Haneefs” but with this difference: “Being true in faith to Allah, and never assigning partners to Him”.

Thus the sublime Truths, the essence of the creed: “There is no deity save God”, seem to be beyond the comprehension of idol-worshippers, all over the world, and in all ages.

THE FIVE-TIME PRAYERS

This performance of the Pilgrimage — a colossal feat of Monotheism, is closely knit around the Ka'bah and its surrounding environment. It occurs only once a year, but far more important and surpassing is the performance of prayers in Islam, which are equally connected with the Ka'bah.

Prayers are an obligatory duty upon every Muslim. This is why every Muslim anywhere around the world turns towards Allah, facing in the direction of the Ka'bah five times daily. Of course, the Ka'bah is for outward direction to face in one's prayers, though inwardly, one faces his entire heart, to the Lord of the Worlds Himself. In this manner, Muslims are so intimately related to the Ka'bah through their Pilgrimage and Prayers, till the last moment of their lives. Not only this, but every Muslim is made to face the direction of the Ka'bah when breathing his last. Nay, even after death he is buried in his last resting place, i.e. in the grave, so that he faces the same direction of the Ka'bah.

PRAYERS AND SACRIFICE

Both the Pilgrimage and the Prayers are equally connected with the Ka'bah. And offering an animal and the Prayers are major Hajj ceremonies, where both the Prayer and sacrifice are special tokens of the single worship of Allah, with both being jointly dedicated to Him. It is a most sublime dedication the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Glory of God be on him) was asked to offer in the following words:

” Say [O Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him)]: ‘Verily, my Salaat (prayer), my sacrifice, my living, and my dying are for Allah, the Lord of the ‘Alamin (mankind, jinns and all that exists), He has no partner, And of this I have been commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims.’” [Qur'an 162-163].

And this forms the only straight path, that is the religion of our father Ibraheem (Abraham) [Alayhissalaam (Peace be upon him)], which is referred to in the preceding verse:

“Say [O Muhammad (Peace be upon him)] “Truly, my Lord has guided me to a Straight path, a right religion, the religion of Ibrahim (Abraham). [Qur'an 6:161].

INTERNATIONAL GATHERING

On the whole, the Hajj is a unique annual gathering of its own kind. Herein, true Muslims from all over the world come together on the basis of one-God worship, that is pure Monotheism and true Islam. Forgetting their mutual differences of caste, color and social status, they assemble in this international city of Makkah to glorify the One Lord of all creation. Incidentally, they get a rare opportunity here to discuss together all sorts of communal, religious, economic, social and political problems on an all-world scale, after which no better or more beneficial gathering could be imagined. Such a high, all-embracing congregation has been held every year in the House of Allah for thousands of years now. All these manifold benefits are hinted at in the words:

“.....That they may witness things that are of benefit to them..” [Qur'an 22:28].

Pilgrimage, therefore, is never a pagan rite, but rather the fulfillment of an incumbent duty concerning One-God worship!

INVITATION TO NON-MUSLIMS

This is the legacy left behind by prophet Abraham (Ibraheem alayhissalaam Peace be upon him) for all posterity to accept and follow, and no people of any country or nation, are an exception to that posterity.

Instead of regarding the Pilgrimage duty as a pagan rite, people ought to reflect upon their own age-old idolatry, and accept and follow the religion of our father Ibraheem (Abraham) [alayhissalaam (Peace be upon him)]. The hour has come for these very people to proclaim of their own accord: “There is no other god Worthy of worship except Allah!”

May they perform the Pilgrimage to the House of God at Makkah! And may they offer their Prayers regularly facing towards that same House! Aameen...

IS ISLAM AN IDEAL WAY OF LIFE? COMMENTS FROM NON-MUSLIM SCHOLARS AND ORIENTALIST:

"The Renaissance of Europe did not take place in the 15th century. Rather, it began when Europe learned from the culture of the Arabs. The cradle of European awakening is not Italy. It is the Muslim Spain."

Robert Briffault - The Making of Humanity

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Johann von Goethe

'If that is Islam, we are all Muslims.'

Johann von Goethe, famous German writer and statesman commenting after Thomas Carlyle explained Islam to him. Source: Carlyle's memoirs of a trip.

If Islam means submission to God,

We all live and die in Islam."

[Source: Goethe's poem]

"In no other language spirit, word and letter are embodied in such a primal way."

Goethe commenting on the Quran (Letter to Schlosser, 23.1.1815, WA IV, 25, 165)

"The teachings of Islam can fail under no circumstances. With all our systems of culture and civilization, we cannot go beyond Islam and, as a matter of fact, no human mind can go beyond the Qur'an."

Letter of Goethe to Eckermann, Sir Henry Elliott's collection, 1865

"The message of Mohammad is flowing toward its noble destination like a pure, fresh and transparent rivulet."

Bernard Shaw, a renowned thinker of our time

"The future religion of the educated, cultured and enlightened people will be Islam. "

"In my view, Islam is the only religion in the world that will remain eternally practicable with changing times."

"if Muhammad (PBUH) were alive today, he would succeed in solving all those problems which threaten to destroy human civilization in our times."

"I have always held the religion of Muhammad in high estimation because of its wonderful vitality. It is the only religion that appears to me to possess that assimilating capacity to the changing phase of existence, which can make itself appeal to every age. I have studied him - the wonderful man, and in my opinion, he must be called the Savior of Humanity." George Bernard Shaw - The Genuine Islam

"I believe that if a man like Mohammad's calibre were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness: I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today."

Philip K. Hitti in 'History of the Arabs'

"Islam does not set impossible goals. There are no mythological intricacies in this message. No hidden meanings or secrets and absolutely no priesthood."

Prof. Phillip K. Hitti - American historian and philosopher - History of the Arabs

"Within a brief span of mortal life, Muhammad called forth of unpromising material, a nation, never welded before; in a country that was hitherto but a geographical expression he established a religion which in vast areas suppressed Christianity and Judaism, and laid the basis of an empire that was soon to embrace within its far flung boundaries the fairest provinces the then civilized world."

Philip K. Hitti in 'History of the Arabs'

“The Book revealed to Muhammad is one and unique of its kind. It has left indelible impression on the hearts of humanity. Nothing can overcome its majesty. The Quran has given new dimensions to human thinking - Surprising reforms, stunning success!”

Rev. B. Margoliouth - A Biography of Mohammad

“The power that created in Muslims a ravenous appetite for knowledge sprung from the Quran. „

Rev. B. Margoliouth

Thomas Carlyle, famous British author - On Heroes and Hero Worship

Thomas Carlyle was amazed at how one man, single-handedly, could weld warring tribes and wandering Bedouins into a most powerful and civilized nation in less than two decades. Napoleon and Gandhi never tired of dreaming of a society along the lines established by this man in Arabia fourteen centuries ago

“A man of truth and fidelity, true in what he did, in what he speaks and thought - this is the only sort of speech worth speaking.”

“The word of Mohammad is a voice direct from nature's own heart--all else is wind in comparison.”

“The sword indeed, but where will you get your sword? Every new opinion, at its starting is precisely in a minority of one. In one man's head alone. There it dwells as yet. One man alone of the whole world believes it, there is one man against all men. That he takes a sword and try to propagate with that, will do little for him. You must get your sword! On the whole, a thing will propagate itself as it can.”

“The lies that we (Christians) have heaped round this man are disgraceful to ourselves only.”

THE IRRATIONALITY OF WESTERN IDEOLOGY AND THE BLIND FAITH OF MUSLIM MODERNISTS

The most important thing for a person who seeks truth is to remain objective and be sceptical of so-called 'given truths' – especially ideas that are in fashion in his/her day and age. In every age and time, there were always ideas that were fashionable, accepted as given, and taken for granted that they were true – but later rejected as false – even laughed at.

The best approach for the rational mind, is to withdraw oneself from the society and time period one inhabits and look at the ideas around oneself for what they are. Many thinkers and philosophers have done this and have written great books whose content mostly remains timeless. The reason for this, is that they have successfully removed themselves from their times and cultures and used their minds to assess the ideas based purely on their evidence and merit, and come to conclusions of truth, no matter how unpopular or odd they seem to their society at the time.

However, the one thing I've noticed, is that most people claim to be sceptical only to ideas they don't like, or which is not in line with the accepted culture or fashion of their times. Many such people even claim that they are 'rational' and want people to 'think for themselves', but really they just want people to 'think' their way into conformity with popular trends and the dominant fashions.

I've always urged Muslims to be sceptical, even of their own beliefs, in order that they can reach certainty and depart from blindly following their parents religion and culture. But unfortunately there is another culture that influences some Muslims and is blindly followed by many of them due to their inability to detach themselves from their society and time and look at the world from a rational and detached perspective – the culture of Western Civilisation.

It is taken as 'accepted' in this day and age that religion is a retrograde force, and that only Secularism or Liberalism can bring progress. It is also accepted 'wisdom' that the development and technological progression of the West is due to their democratic systems of ruling, and their liberal secular values. The concept of 'democracy', 'nationalism', 'feminism', 'secularism' and [the Liberal conception of] 'human rights' is taken as given 'truths' to the degree that they have attained the level of an unquestioned religious dogma. Most people don't know how to philosophically justify these ideas, or how they came about – all that people know is, 'it's the MODERN way to do things'.

However, just like the proverbial big elephant in the room that everyone is ignoring, these ideas lack any rational justification or intellectual basis. For example, Democracy is impossible, people will always be ruled by one leader or small group of leaders – usually the elites of their society. This was something both Plato, and the classical Muslim philosopher Al Farabi realised and wrote about.

Nationalism cannot be justified, as there is no clear way to delineate one nation from another [is it common language? Then is USA, Australia and South Africa all one nation?]. Secondly, why should humans be separated and discriminated into categories that should hold no moral difference or division??

Feminism cannot be rationally justified either, as basing rights on gender is either arbitrary and holistic at best, or elitist and sectarian at worst (if men are not also considered equally in the equation). If men and women should be exactly equal in everything, as Feminism claims, then why not egalitarianism instead of feminism??

Secularism cannot be rationally justified, because in essence it posits the absurd notion that man's purpose in life should be separate from man's affairs in life. Secularism then results in a materialistic re-interpretation of man's purpose of life, and the imposition of this purpose in place of a former non-materialistic purpose – with no conclusive reason why one is superior to another. Secularism then naturally ends up being non-neutral to this central question of human purpose, while fooling the people as pretending to be neutral!

'Human rights' [as understood by Liberalism] are arbitrary, prone to change depending on society's current tastes at any given point in time, and lacks any rational justification for where rights even come from in the first place. The irony of Liberalism is, while pretending to be materialistic, it borrowed a lot of its rights from Christianity and theology (which is where the term 'God given rights' comes from) then quietly divorced from it later on when it wanted to claim 'universality' to the world. Consequently, 'rights' can't be justified. For example, if humans have rights merely for being human, then why are criminals denied the 'right to freedom' when they are put in jails?? Surely they are still human, and therefore deserving of their full 'human rights'? Apparently not.

However, the Modernist 'Muslims' doesn't question these Western imports. They are perfectly happy to be sceptical against all Islamic laws, beliefs and traditions, but never to be sceptical on the Western ideas they blindly follow and adore. Modernists can only defend these borrowed Western ideas with emotional arguments, usually either brushing off the criticism as 'just wrong' or 'out of kilter' or claim the criticism is just 'a strawman' of their beliefs – without providing any evidence to show why its a strawman. I've yet to hear a rational argument from a modernist other than merely playing down criticism of Western ideas as merely 'the ramblings of Islamist fundamentalism' – which is the equivalent of the dismissive saying 'you are just haters'.

This reveals something very interesting about the Modernist mindset. As the saying goes 'you can't reason someone out of something they weren't reasoned into', and the Modernist 'Muslim's' blind faith in Western ideas is just that, an irrational dogma they've adopted blindly. But this leads us to the question 'what made them believe these ideas in the first place??, why are they so alluring??'. The answer is quite simple, 'might makes right'. The West, though declining, still retains a degree of cultural, technological, economic and military superiority over the Muslim world. The Muslim world, for reasons of social and historical circumstances is currently in a ignorant and declined state – it's simply human nature for the weak to look up to the strong, just like the Barbarian tribes of Europe looked up to Roman culture before and adopted their habits and language.

The are two main problems with this modernist logic. They have made two faulty assumptions, and this leads them to their error.

The first assumption is that Muslim decline is due to the 'traditional Muslim understanding of Islam. This is easily refuted when we consider that during the first 500 years of 'traditional Islam' Muslims were technologically, militarily and economically the most advanced in the world – innovating many new technologies and expanding the boundaries of human knowledge. The fact that Muslims believed in hudud punishments, the traditional family, or wearing turbans and having beards didn't limit their cultural advancement in the slightest. This demonstrates that the spirit of technological progress and knowledge development has NOTHING to do with the 'traditional' Islamic law system, and everything to do with the Muslim state of mind. Consequently, the main problem of the Muslim world is not getting rid of 'medieval laws' but to rediscover of the same spirit and state of mind that motivated our ancestors to advance in all spheres of life. The Islamic political system is not limited to only being implemented using medieval technology, but can be implemented using modern technology! Systems don't change, technology changes. Democracy is 1000 years older than Islam, yet no one believes that implementing it will send people back to the age of wearing togas and worshipping Zeus! Political systems are timeless, because they merely describe a set of relationships between humans, not a technological tool or piece of equipment.

The second biggest assumption made by modernists, is that religion is a retrograde force, and that Western advancement, political stability and economic success is the result of leaving religion and implementation of democracy, liberalism, secularism and nationalism. However, history begs to differ.

Christianity was never the reason for the European dark ages, but rather the fall of the Roman Empire and the rise of barbarian tribes is the most glaringly obvious reason. Historians are generally agreed that the last great ancient, or classical period philosopher before the fall into the dark ages was the Christian thinker St Augustine! However, since Christianity can only exist in the minds of humans, if the humans carrying it are ignorant, shallow thinkers, then their understanding and practice of Christianity will also be ignorant and shallow. To believe the dark ages was the cause of the Catholic clergy's behaviour during this period is to confuse the symptom with the problem.

For most of the last 500 years, technological advancement in the West started, and has mostly occurred, under highly religious non-democratic European monarchies and empires. The Liberal Democratic Europe we see today mostly emerged only in the last century! [1900-1999]. The vast majority of pioneering Western scientists were not Atheists, nor did they live under Secularism, but rather they were devout Catholics and even clergy (e.g. Roger Bacon, Johannes Kepler, Copernicus, Descartes, Pascal, Boyle and even the recent George Lemaitre, discoverer of the 'big bang theory'...) or protestant Church (e.g. Newton) – and much scientific literature and almost ALL institutes of higher education and research were under patronage by the Catholic [and later Anglican] Church!

Economic success in the West started with colonialism (and continued with neo-colonialism to this day)- but now is seriously declining COINCIDENTALLY with the rise of countries powerful enough to be outside Western control (e.g. India, China, Iran, Brazil etc).

As for political stability, it is mostly due to wealth – but even then people should check their history. Many Liberal and Secular countries today are not the result of an unbroken continued implementation of Liberalism, but rather many currently Liberal countries are the results of a second attempt to re-impose Liberalism after a previous attempt failed, which led to civil wars and the collapse into fascist or autocratic regimes (e.g. Spain, France, Portugal, Italy, Germany, Mexico, Japan, Greece etc...over the last 150 years). And the future looks like Liberalism is collapsing again in a number of Western countries, with fascism rising again 'coincidentally' as these same countries get poorer [recent example, Greece, Ukraine!].

What took the West out of the Dark Ages, was the change induced by their interaction with the medieval Islamic civilisation which developed a spirit and state of mind that led to the beginning of technological development and the advancement of human knowledge LONG before Liberalism, Secularism, Nationalism were invented [and Democracy re-implemented since Ancient Greek times]. These ideas did not begin the Western intellectual renaissance, but were rather the RECENT PRODUCTS of it [along with Communism and Fascism]. Oh how human memory is short to believe those ideas have existed since the beginning of Western development! If you could take a time machine and go back 100 years, you'd see a Europe mostly NOT LIBERAL and 150 years back mostly not secular. Technically, UK is still not a Secular country! The head of state is the head of the national Church – a relic of the not-so-distant past).

In the end, Western development came from a state of mind and spirit, not from an ideology or set of ideas (just look at the modern example of China, a country fast outpacing USA in inventions and industry, despite being not Liberal and not Democratic!).

In contrast, the Arabs developed and advanced not when they removed religion from their life's affairs (like the pagan Quraysh had been doing for centuries) but change only happened after they CONNECTED religion with their life's affairs – Islam. It was only then that the Arabs then rose at an intellectually and technologically alarming rate, eventually surpassing all the empires around them in achievements.

What changed the Arabs was not contact with another civilisation, but rather the introduction of Islam – which spread beyond the Arabs, creating a new 'nation' (the Muslim Ummah) and assimilation different races and cultures into itself. The ideal that spurred the early Muslims to excel in civilisation, and to expand human knowledge and condition, was the ideal of ihsan – the attainment of the perfection of the Worship of Allah Almighty. Unlike the secular understanding of this in the current Muslim dark age, the classical understanding of Ihsan was the perfection not just of praying, and dhikr, nor just morals and conduct, but the perfection of wisdom,

knowledge of God's creation [the universe] and the worship of him through the highest degree of philanthropy to our fellow human beings – creating hospitals, medicines, mental therapies, sewage systems, health care and technologies that provide ease. The obligation to prayer alone, viewed today as a purely private spiritual affair, created in the medieval Islamic world, the material and knowledge advancements in city planning, street lighting, acoustics, astronomy, navigation, water provision to cities, even domestic plumbing [yes, all that from just the Islamic obligation of the Salah!].

The task of the Muslim today, is not to change Islam in the hope of imitating the West's current intellectual follies, but rather to recapture the state of mind and spirit that made our medieval ancestors excel in civilisation.

And to our Modernist friends, with the decline of the West, and the social, economic and political problems rising in its societies, perhaps we should ask them this searching question 'why do you want to imitate the most recent ideas produced by a declining civilisation?'

Perhaps because love is blind...

100 direct instructions in the Quran for mankind.

1. Do not be rude in speech (3:159)
2. Restrain Anger (3:134)
3. Be good to others (4:36)
4. Do not be arrogant (7:13)
5. Forgive others for their mistakes (7:199)
6. Speak to people mildly (20:44)
7. Lower your voice (31:19)
8. Do not ridicule others (49:11)
9. Be dutiful to parents (17:23)
10. Do not say a word of disrespect to parents (17:23)
11. Do not enter parents' private room without asking permission (24:58)
12. Write down the debt (2:282)
13. Do not follow anyone blindly (2:170)
14. Grant more time to repay if the debtor is in hard time (2:280)
15. Don't consume interest (2:275)
16. Do not engage in bribery (2:188)
17. Do not break the promise (2:177)

- 18. Keep the trust (2:283)
- 19. Do not mix the truth with falsehood (2:42)
- 20. Judge with justice between people (4:58)
- 21. Stand out firmly for justice (4:135)
- 22. Wealth of the dead should be distributed among his family members (4:7)
- 23. Women also have the right for inheritance (4:7)
- 24. Do not devour the property of orphans (4:10)
- 25. Protect orphans (2:220)
- 26. Do not consume one another's wealth unjustly (4:29)
- 27. Try for settlement between people (49:9)
- 28. Avoid suspicion (49:12)
- 29. Do not spy and backbite (2:283)
- 30. Do not spy or backbite (49:12)
- 31. Spend wealth in charity (57:7)
- 32. Encourage feeding poor (107:3)
- 33. Help those in need
by finding them (2:273)
- 34. Do not spend money extravagantly (17:29)
- 35. Do not invalidate charity with reminders (2:264)
- 36. Honor guests (51:26)
- 37. Order righteousness to people only after practicing it yourself (2:44)
- 38. Do not commit abuse on the earth (2:60)
- 39. Do not prevent people from mosques (2:114)
- 40. Fight only with those who fight you (2:190)
- 41. Keep the etiquettes of war (2:191)
- 42. Do not turn back in battle (8:15)
- 43. No compulsion in religion (2:256)
- 44. Believe in all prophets (2:285)
- 45. Do not have sexual intercourse during menstrual period (2:222)
- 46. Breast feed your children for two complete years (2:233)
- 47. Do not even approach unlawful sexual intercourse (17:32)

- 48. Choose rulers by their merit (2:247)
- 49. Do not burden a person beyond his scope (2:286)
- 50. Do not become divided (3:103)
- 51. Think deeply about the wonders and creation of this universe (3:191)
- 52. Men and Women have equal rewards for their deeds (3:195)
- 53. Do not marry those in your blood relation (4:23)
- 54. Family should be led by men (4:34)
- 55. Do not be miserly (4:37)
- 56. Do not keep envy (4:54)
- 57. Do not kill each other (4:92)
- 58. Do not be an advocate for deceit (4:105)
- 59. Do not cooperate in sin and aggression (5:2)
- 60. Cooperate in righteousness (5:2)
- 61. 'Having majority' is not a criterion of truth (6:116)
- 62. Be just (5:8)
- 63. Punish for crimes in an exemplary way (5:38)
- 64. Strive against sinful and unlawful acts (5:63)
- 65. Dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine are prohibited (5:3)
- 66. Avoid intoxicants and alcohol (5:90)
- 67. Do not gamble (5:90)
- 68. Do not insult others' deities (6:108)
- 69. Don't reduce weight or measure to cheat people (6:152)
- 70. Eat and Drink, But Be Not Excessive (7:31)
- 71. Wear good cloths during prayer times (7:31)
- 72. protect and help those who seek protection (9:6)
- 73. Keep Purity (9:108)
- 74. Never give up hope of Allah's Mercy (12:87)
- 75. Allah will forgive those who have done wrong out of ignorance (16:119)
- 76. Invitation to God should be with wisdom and good instruction (16:125)
- 77. No one will bear others' sins (17:15)
- 78. Do not kill your children for fear of poverty (17:31)

79. Do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge (17:36)
80. Keep aloof from what is vain (23:3)
81. Do not enter others' houses without seeking permission (24:27)
82. Allah will provide security for those who believe only in Allah (24:55)
83. Walk on earth in humility (25:63)
84. Do not neglect your portion of this world (28:77)
85. Invoke not any other god along with Allah (28:88)
86. Do not engage in homosexuality (29:29)
87. Enjoin right, forbid wrong (31:17)
88. Do not walk in insolence through the earth (31:18)
89. Women should not display their finery (33:33)
90. Allah forgives all sins (39:53)
91. Do not despair of the mercy of Allah (39:53)
92. Repel evil by good (41:34)
93. Decide on affairs by consultation (42:38)
94. Most noble of you is the most righteous (49:13)
95. No Monasticism in religion (57:27)
96. Those who have knowledge will be given a higher degree by Allah (58:11)
97. Treat non-Muslims in a kind and fair manner (60:8)
98. Save yourself from covetousness (64:16)
99. Seek forgiveness of Allah. He is Forgiving and Merciful (73:20)
100. Do not repel one who asks (93:10)